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OF
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VOL IIND NO. 2

1966-67

EDITED BY
AMALENDU BOSE



CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

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Language-consciousness of Shakespeare's Teachers

K. Lahiri

THE teachers in Shakespeare's dramas, true to their type in reality, show a special interest in language. They are ever conscious of what others and they themselves speak. Sensitiveness to words is their pedagogic characteristic. They are always critical of fashions and faults in the speech of other people, both high and low, while they themselves are prone to experimentation, innovation, and coinage, and not unoften lapse into linguistic affectations and excesses of a pedantic nature. These tendencies characterize more prominently the masters introduced in the comedies, though at least one in a tragedy is susceptible to the weakness of pomposity and stilted dignity of style.

Interest in language was a characteristic of the Elizabethan age in England. Along with national life, speech was in a state of unusual expansion. The English people of the day were very much alive to the power and possibilities of words and expressions. 'The art of putting things cleverly and playing upon words was never carried to a greater height than in the age of Elizabeth.' (Minto: *Characteristics of English Poets*). The Elizabethans were conscious word-artists, 'engineers of phrases', as Thomas Nash put it. They showed an extraordinary craze for uncommon expressions and linguistic innovations.

Particularly in the last decade of the sixteenth century new words were replenishing the English language at an amazing rate, and fresh linguistic experiments were being launched upon constantly. The English tongue was not only changing with unparalleled rapidity, but the English people were peculiarly conscious of it. A fresh stream of words was pouring into the language, drawing its tributaries from many sources; all sorts of new experiments were being tried out, some of them high-flown and most egregious; and the effect of all this was the bewilderment of the uneducated, who made up the educated, who found in it a game which they played with unflagging zest.

The Elizabethans' attention to words was accentuated by the value attached to them in search and reading, which were lively and of a wide range of interest. In the last century and a half, with the development of industrial processes, there has been such a mass diffusion of

reading matter that the reading of those times becomes so different from ours in degree that it must be thought of as an entirely different kind. When we speak of reading now, or when we ask for something to read, most of us probably think of fiction. But reading to Shakespeare's contemporaries would not have meant that at all. They would have read romances, but these would not belong to the same category as fiction today. They would also have read poetry, sermons, philosophy, translations from the classics and from contemporary European languages, especially Italian, history, the records of voyages, and some miscellany. Reading of this kind would certainly call for more vigilance, more attention to the word than is at present given in the reading of novels.

Shakespeare himself was immensely interested in the English language. The Warwickshire dialect, which he found ready at hand, was remarkably rich and independent of the standard language of London. It was marked by variety and strength, and, if loud-voiced, nevertheless capable, the more by the admixture of French, of rhyme, and gentle vowel-effects! In the hands of London printers Shakespeare's local dialect suffered a good deal.

Shakespeare's language also absorbed rich tones from a wide range of interests and from the mannerisms of individualized speakers. Formal speech, affected Latinized diction, slang, snatches of popular song, coarseness, words and phrases soaked in religious associations, are all used by him to develop what he wants to say. He is careful to avail himself of the various tones language offered him.

And he uses language with great virtuosity. He deliberately plays upon the associations of words; he draws out their emotional significances, their ambiguities are savoured; he relishes the possibilities offered him for puns, overt and concealed. His attitude is that of the poet who has an extremely sensitive instrument with a wide range of tones.

The universal Elizabethan interest in language and Shakespeare's absorption in it, make wordy duels an integral element of Shakespeare's plays. The part played in his dramas by arguments, special pleading, debate, effective turns of speech, the cut and thrust of speakers quarreling, or determined to score off each other, is an important one.

Even in tragedies wordy passages at arms contribute to the total effect. For instance, the opening of *Richard II* is a series of angry speeches, of persons defying and accusing each other in a strain of eloquence which quite obviously appealed to the audience. Hamlet in his soliloquies addresses the ordinary Elizabethan playgoer.

But it is in comedy that the play on words can be made fully utilized, for comedy is more intellectual and less deeply disturbing emotionally. In Shakespeare's comic plays much depends on the wit of

the main characters, on a professional jester or clown, and on characters from low life who seem to have all the flexibility of speech of their betters.

Of all the games played with the English tongue on Shakespeare's comic stage those in *Love's Labour's Lost* are the most abundant and amusing. This play is a great feast of language, most zestful in the indulgence in linguistic trickery, and must have seemed to contemporaries the most fascinating. Holoferny, Biron, Nathaniel, and company present a whole host of linguistic oddities.

In *Merry Wives of Windsor* too, Shakespeare attempts linguistic fun, though at a lower level of excellence, in figures like Dr. Caius and Sir Hugh Evans. Act II, scene iii opens with the doctor and his servant Rugby waiting for Sir Hugh to arrive. Shallow, Page, and Hostemter and proceed to have fun with the doctor's English as much as with his anger. The doctor is persuaded to follow the Host through the fields to Frogmore under pretense of seeing Anne Page, but actually to confront Sir Hugh for more amusement. The pedagogue Evan's Welsh mannerisms in English speech provide no less fun to the audience. In all such exploitations of linguistic peculiarities for amusement and perverted use of words for comic effect, and philological fun generally, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Merry Wives of Windsor* are related.

The characters in comedy constantly hack the language for extracting fun. That appears to be the chief comic functions of these bubbles of human oddities thrown up by Shakespeare's comic imagination. Thus the Welsh person-master Evans, when Anne Page is mentioned as a likely bride for Master Slender, delivers himself in this fashion: It is that fery person for all the 'orld, as just as you will desire, and seven hundred pounds of moneys, and gold, and silver, is her grandsire, upon his death's bed—God deliver to a joyful resurrections!—give when she is able to overtake seventeen years old (I, i. 45-9).

Evans is very much language-conscious, sensitive to the use of words, schoolmaster fashion:

PISTOL. He hears with ears.

EVANS. The tevil and his tam! What

phrso is this, *He hears with ear?*

Why, it is affections. (I, i. 141-43).

He shows a genuine love of words for their own sake. In sheer pleasure of language he pours a profusion of expressions:

EVANS. There dwells one Mistress Quickly,

which is in the manner of his (Dr. Caius's) nurse, on his dry nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer (I, ii, 3-6).

Master Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost*, above all others, is

Shakespeare's superb creation in pedagogic interest in language. He is fashioned in true conformity to the precision in English which was insisted upon in the national education of the time. In IV. ii. 4, describing the young deer that has been hunted, he uses the Latin word 'Sanguis'. This is interpreted by Malone as 'in blood, in full vigour'. Rann suggests the reading: 'In sanguis, in blood'. This will, Marshall points out aptly, emphasize not the pedant's Latinity but his keenness for precision in language.

His desire for seeking effective, strong language is betrayed a few lines down in the use of 'Ratherest unconfirmed' (IV. ii. 19). Here 'unconfirmed' may mean a mere novice in the ways of the world. Or, perhaps, the 'ratherest' explanation is that Holofernes himself had no precise idea as to the meaning of 'unconfirmed', but wished to round up the sentence with a comparative and a superlative, be the meanings what they may.

In his concern for accuracy in meaning Holofernes even uses a word in its etymological, root sense. Thus 'supervise' (IV. ii. 119) is used by him in the sense of 'look over'.

But with all his concern for precision and punctiliousness in language, Holofernes, like all veteran masters, shows fondness for common idioms and popular phrases. Thus in IV. ii. 22 he says, 'Twice-sod . . . bis coctus'. The reference is probably to the old proverb-aphorism about twice-sodden coleworts, used of a tale twice-told, or a sentence twice-uttered, like Dull's. Perhaps it will be found in some of the school-books of the time, like several others of the pedant's tags.

In their use of language, all Shakespeare's teachers are given to experiments, innovations, and coinages. Through them Shakespeare, while criticizing current linguistic fashions, himself experiments with all kinds of adaptations and archaisms, he is an ingenious user of language all through.

Most of his teachers show the Elizabethan freedom in their forced use of a word to do the function of a different part of speech:

EVANS. Give ear to his motions, Master Slender: I will *description* (for describe) the matter to you, if you *be* (for 'have') capacity of it.

(*Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. i. 205-07)

They would not mind using grammatically incorrect expressions if these hear nice to the ear. Thus Holofernes says, 'Thou *disputes*' (*Love's Labour's Lost*, V, i. 65), and there is no need of editorilly correcting this ungrammatical but smoother form.

In their eagerness to show off their extraordinary learning, the teachers now and then turn out original coinages of words and turns of expression. Thus Holofernes, in order to appear singular in his speech, uses a pedantic adjective *Peregrinate*, with a foreign air. As Armado

describes himself as 'a man of travel', this plugging of the word in its English form (Spanish: el Peregrins, traveller) is made finally certain through the expression which Holofernes invents for Armado:

HOLFERNES. He is too peregrinate, as I may
call it. (V. i. 15).

The word, 'peregrinate' is used by Holofernes in the sense of 'outlandish, one having the air of a traveller or foreigner. It is obviously an adjective of the Pedant's own coinage, fashioned in the analogy or manner of 'Italianate'. The word, used nowhere else in the language, clinches the other traveller references in the context.

Nathaniel, the Pedant's shadow or yes-man, so much admires this that he emphasizes the joke for the audience by his comment that it is a singular and choice epithet, and pulls out his note-book to take down this learned expression, the stage direction being printed in the play. Such tables in which to get down anything noteworthy either read or overheard were standard equipment for any Elizabethan with pretensions to learning or fashion.

In *Merry Wives of Windsor*, the schoolmaster Sir Hugh Evans too has a tendency towards coinage and unfamiliar uses of words:

EVANS. You must speak *possitable* if you can carry her your desires towards her (I. i, 226-7).

The use of exuberant language is just a commonly employed trick for Shakespeare's teachers to overawe the multitude of vulgar people in the midst of whom they normally move. Shakespeare's own fondness for exuberance in words in his early plays comes out in the speeches of his masters. In *Love's Labour's Lost* we can not help being struck by the quantity of verbal sparring virtually in the whole play, in which the dialogue consists mainly of 'sets of wit well played' and 'fine volleys of words quick shot off.' In this comedy Shakespeare exemplified the pedantic and over-laden speech self-consciously employed by those who were as ready to play the dandy with words as were the courtiers with their costumes.

There is discrepancy between the value of words used and the quantity of sense conveyed. Words are beaten finer and thinner than the natural facts for which they stand. *Love's Labour's Lost* is the first play in which Shakespeare boldly questions the truth of words. The facts of nature prove stronger than verbal resolves. The words and antics of the Humour characters are brought into line with the theme. Holofernes and Armado both draw out the threads of their verbosity finer than the staple of their argument. When Shakespeare wrote this comedy he had learnt to exchange 'taffeta phrases, silken terms precise' for 'russet years and honest kersey noes'.

Holofernes has an eye for conceit in language. He not only himself produces conceits in words but discovers conceits in the language of

simple people. In IV. ii. 86-87 the clown Costard's expression—'piercing a hogshead' strikes him as 'a good lustre of conceit in a turf of earth'.

As a pedant Holofernes is also fond of using obscure words or words in unusual senses. In V. i. 86-88 the expression, 'posterior of the day' (for 'afternoon') used by Armado is approved by Holofernes as 'liable' (suitable), 'congruent' (justified a neglected word meaning 'right name'), 'measurable' (meet), 'chose' (chosen or choice, from 'choise').

Thus *Love's Labour's Lost*, demonstrating as it does Shakespeare's love of a language for its own intoxicating sake, abounds plentifully in affection and pedantry, which has fascination not simply for the master but for his creation too. Such affectations in speech are not quite justified in the human count. Holofernes has to his credit plenty of strained uses of words and terms employed in affected senses. He calls Armado 'spruce' in the sense of ever-refined or affected (V. i. 14). He uses 'wrought' (i.e. rought) in the sense of 'reached' (IV. ii. 49). He says 'affecting the letter' in the sense of using the trick of alliteration (IV. ii. 64). And he alludes to the occupation of the Princess as 'preyfull' (IV. ii. 66), an affected term for 'preyful', i.e. pursuing prey or fame: hence 'preyfull'.

Not only is Shakespeare a master of language but also he appears in the role of a critic of language. Through the eccentricities of speech of the teachers Shakespeare is really criticizing and satirizing fashions among his contemporaries. The end of Elizabeth's reign was a 'period of unparalleled linguistic awareness. . . . Verbal fashions chased each other through the court, and the smallness of the Elizabethan world gave the currency in all classes of society. . . . Words mattered; they were savoured, bandied to and fro, followed up from jest to jest' (G. D. Wilcock: *Shakespeare as Critic of Language*, pp. 6-8). In such a world the corrupters of language were almost as welcome as the affectors: there was more fun to be got out of them.

In such a vein *Love's Labour's Lost* illustrates and holds up to ridicule three distinct types of linguistic corruption and extravagance: (1) the stilted preciousness and pretentious eloquence of court circles represented in Armado, (2) the rustic misunderstanding and misuse of language betrayed by Dull and Costard, and (3) the pedantic affectation paraded by master Holofernes. The pedagogue clearly criticizes the fashionable jargon of Shakespeare's time. "Shakespeare has put an excellent description of fashionable jargon into the mouth of the critical Holofernes as 'too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were too peregrinate, as I may call it'; and nothing can be more marked than the difference when he breaks loose from the trammels as he had imposed on himself, 'as light as bird from brake', and speaks in his own person." (Hazlitt).

The teachers in Shakespeare's early comedies constantly find fault with the language of other people. Holofernes shows a great concern for etiquette and correct form of speech. In the matter of language of address, he is very particular about the formality and propriety of speech. When he finds Armado saying 'Chirrah' in calling his page, Holofernes at once proceeds to correct: 'Quare Chirrah, not Sirrah?' (V. i. 33-34). 'Sirrah' was the correct title from a master to his servant.

Holofernes shows pedagogic punctiliousness about language. Thus in IV. ii. 170 he says, 'Being repast'. This is the Folio reading; possibly this is right. The schoolmaster in his pedantic way uses 'repast' as a participle: the grace then would be after dinner. It required no pedantry to use 'repast' for 'repasted'.

In regard to the use of language, he is not only scrupulously correct himself, but also demands similar correctness of others. As a schoolmaster he always insists on grammatical correctness. In V. i. 63 he says, 'Thou disputes like an infant': Being a pedagogue, he is particular about using the singular verb 'disputes' for the singular subject 'Thou'.

He has the pedant's vanity which tends to detect errors in little omissions and deficiencies in others' speeches and writings. He must, a scholar as he is, find faults with the script or recital of a literary piece. Thus in IV. ii. 117-118, when Nathaniel reads out Armado's love poem to Jaquenetta, Holofernes is prompt in his criticism in a scholarly manner: 'You find not the apostrophus, and miss the accent'. Apparently Holofernes complains that in the sonnet script the apostrophe marks are missing, and hence the accents do not come in their right places in Nathaniel's recital.

There were two forms of the word—apostrophe and apostrophus—meaning the sign (!) indicating the omission of one or more letters. Ben Jonson in *The Second Book of the English Grammar* gives a careful definition: 'Apostrophus is the rejecting of a vowel from the beginning or end of a word. The note whereof, though it many times through the negligence of writers and printers is quite omitted, yet by right... hath this mark, which is such a semi-circle (.) placed in the top?' It is the negligence of the scribe in omitting this mark that, complains the pedant, misleads the curate in his reading of the piece.

In *Merry Wives of Windsor* Master Evans too is keen on detecting defects in another's vocabulary:

BARDOLPH. Why, sir, for my part, I say
the gentleman has drunk himself
out of his five sentences.

EVANS. It is his five senses; fie, what
the ignorance is (I. i. 166-68).

He is prompt in pointing out another's wrong use of words, while he himself is open to the same charge:

SLENDER. If you say, *marry her*, I will
marry her, that I am freely dis-
solved (? resolved), and dis-
solutely (? resolutely).

EVANS. It is a fery discretion (? discret)
answer, save the faul is in the
'ort dissolutely: the 'ort is, ac-
cording to our meaning, resolutely. (I. i. 240-45).

Again:

EVANS. I will not be absence (for absent)
at the grace. (I. i. 253).

The pedagogic concern for precision extends from orthography to prosody as well. The pedant Holofernes shows that he has a sharp ear for detecting the slightest lapse from metrical correctness. Thus Holofernes's observation on the deficiency of apostrophus in Armado's love sonnet may perhaps be taken as his comment on the last line of the poem, which appears to be a foot short. All the other lines are size-footed. 'That sings heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue'—has five feet.

In the Temple edition Sir Israel Gollancz writes, 'Does not Holofernes's criticism bear directly on the last line of the canzonet? Nathaniel should have read: 'That singes heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue'. It was usual to mark e's with two dots when sounded'. This is called Diacreses. By 'apostrophus' Holofernes may mean 'diacreses'.

The editors of the New Cambridge Shakespeare agree: "Nathaniel should have said 'singes' and Holofernes should have said, 'diacreses': but Holofernes blunders as usual, and employs a term which implies contraction rather than expansion".

But Shakespeare whose mind was always fixed on stage effect, could hardly have planned such a joke, which no one in the audience would be likely to grasp without a printed text before him.

It is all much simpler: Holofernes, who has a reputation for learning to keep up, is bound to find fault with Nathaniel's reading. Any term, provided it sounds learned, will do to confound the poor eurate.

Many of Shakespeare's linguistic satires, expressed through the eccentricities of speech of his pedagogues or their comments, keenly enjoyed by the audience in his own day, have lost their significance for us and become incomprehensible now. The topicalities of Shakespeare's age are not ours. Even for his own time he seems to have inserted an undue number of private jokes among the fireworks of public satire. We have yet to solve in which direction many of these were meant to go off. The clues to many of the witticisms in *Love's Labour's Lost* have been obscured or lost today.

* Discussing these blemishes, Dr. Johnson charges Shakespeare with sacrificing permanent interest to personal satire. Shakespeare, he argues, in presenting Holofernes, was so bent on ridiculing the local schoolmaster that his portrait has little value for those who are unacquainted with the original: 'It is of the nature of personal investives to be soon unintelligible; and the author that gratifies private malice, *animum in vulnere porit*, destroys the future efficacy of his own writings and sacrifices the esteem of succeeding time to the laughter of a day'.

Some hold that Dr. Johnson is very trenchant and very true; but wholly irrelevant. 'There is no private malice in the presentation of Holofernes or Nathaniel or Armado. There is not even a sustained criticism of their extravagance'.

But there are definitely some topical linguistic satires in the master's speeches, the edge of which has been blunted with the passage of time. Holofernes sometimes uses a word or expression in a narrow, colloquial sense current only among a private group of people such as tutors and pupils.

Thus he says, 'jerks of invention' (IV. ii. 124) to mean strokes or sallies of wit. This is a very proper figure for a schoolmaster's use, since 'jerking' (stroke) was equivalent to whipping in school terminology. So in V. i. 32 'Chirrah' is probably Holofernes's mimicking of Armado's pronunciation of 'Sirrah' addressed to Moth or Costard for some reason obvious to Shakespeare's original audience. The audience, moreover, was intended to take special note of the 'Chirrah', as is clear from the way in which Holofernes underlines it.

The Impasse of Psychological Realism

Sitansu Maitra

It's the old question of how not only Shakespeare but almost all other great writers send a thrill through us and at the same time violate the accepted methods of psychological realism. Of course these methods vary from age to age, especially between ages that are separated by distinct attitudes to life. These attitudes are complex psychological structures determined on the one hand by the active components of accumulated tradition and on the other by the ways of life currently imposed by the changing socio-economic pattern. But psychological realism touches only the upper layers of these prevailing attitudes at particular points of time and leaves untouched those deeper layers that respond, all on a sudden, in a way that prompted Coleridge to formulate that much-maligned yet indispensable concept 'willing suspension of disbelief'. It is difficult to see why T. S. Eliot misunderstood the phrase. Precisian as he was, he perhaps ignored the ordinary significance of the word 'willing' and took in the strict sense in which the word is used in the science of psychology as meaning 'a deliberate expenditure of psychic energy for taking a decision'. The same thing has happened to 'suspension' too. What Coleridge means is an experience common to all those who have ever responded (whether at the moment or subsequently, it does not matter, but of course in the proper context) to

I moved, and could not feel my limbs ;
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

Or even to the following:

GIRL'S FIRST LOVE SONG

What's in the net? I feel
Frightened and shaken.
Is it a sweet-slipping eel
Or a snake that I've taken?

Love's a blind fisherman,
Love cannot see ;
Whisper the child, then,
What would love of me?

It leaps in my hands ! This is
Anguish unguessed.
With cunning and kisses
It creeps to my breast.

It bites me, O wonder!
Worms under my skin.
My heart bursts asunder,
I tremble within.

Where go and where hide me?
The shuddersome thing
Rages inside me,
Then sinks in a ring.

What passion can this be?
O that spasm again !
It burrows in ecstasy
Till I am slain.¹

or, say, to Act I, scene i of *The Winter's Tale* or, to take an extreme example, to *Faust*, Part I, scene xxi. I might as well have referred to almost the whole of the *Faust*. If one does not respond to these, well, nothing can be done about it. Indeed, it is a case of all or no response.

Professor Stoll, unable to find psychological realism in Shakespeare, tries to save the Shakespeare myth by roundly hypothesizing that 'in the greatest tragedies (and comedies and epics too) the situation has been fundamentally unreasonable'.² And he seems to close the issue with a final flourish by quoting Aristotle and Longinus, apparently in his support:

'Now "the impossibilities are justifiable", says Aristotle, "if they serve the end of poetry if they make the effect of some portion of the work more striking". For, as Longinus observes after him, "the effect of genius is not to persuade (or convince) the audience but rather to transport them out of themselves ; and the object of poetry is to enthrall".'³

Though whether Longinus and Aristotle can be equated is a debatable question yet we could have accepted Stoll's point as a basis for

serious discussion, had he not confused issues a few pages further on by stating that in the Elizabethan Age neither the dramatist nor the audience had the present-day psychological interest and bias⁴ and that what in Shakespeare appears barefaced artifice to us today did not appear so to the Elizabethans. To believe the improbable and to have no psychological interest are not one and the same things and the fact of an artifice for us turning into an art for the Elizabethans argues neither for psychological interest nor for lack of it. He next goes on to say that conscience in the Macbeths is a merely conventional thing—not a force issuing out of their inner nature. It is, he concludes, the voice of their creator. Stoll thus denies any individuality to the protagonists in the drama, denies Shakespeare the minimum impersonality as a dramatist and finally concocts out of this confusion a theory of 'conventions', as if conventions are extra-psychic, independent configurations injected arbitrarily into the human mind. It is thus that he discovers the following item of Elizabethan dramaturgy:

'These two circumstances—the traditional indifference to psychological analysis and the traditional conception of the conscience—made it possible (or necessary) for Shakespeare and other Elizabethan dramatists, confronting such material, to adopt a simplification, or shortcut, particularly welcome in a tragedy'.⁵

Of course Stoll does not hit upon this recipe of a device or 'artifice' all by himself. He is an over-enthusiastic follower of the pioneers of the so-called historical school of criticism—Rümelin in late nineteenth century Germany, and Schücking in this century. Rümelin wrote as far back as 1874 and in his criticism of Shakespeare's lack of psychological realism he was rather naive, giving him, to remain on the safe-side, full credit for his genius but debiting probability against him. Augustus Ralli gives a summary of Rümelin's thesis and Schücking takes the credit of rediscovering 'this highly gifted and artistic critic' who 'has too often been regarded as a sort of Lucifer by the representatives of orthodox Shakespearean research, a rebel who in arrogant and infatuated delusion rose against the divinity of Shakespeare, thereby meriting to be hurled into the darkest depths of oblivion'.⁶ That a critic falls into disregard and neglect is not due so much to a deliberate choice on the part of the readers in general as to the inability of the critic himself to prove or demonstrate his own value at the moment. A later age may amply compensate for this neglect by recognizing his worth at more than its proper value. Rümelin takes his stand on 'the psychological basis of all human action'—a basis that the initial situation in *King Lear* lacks and therefore 'the opening scene of *Lear* is absurd'. Shakespeare 'does not harmonize situations and characters'. He excels only in patches—'single parts must interest and amuse' us in Shakespeare who is not 'bound by logical con-

sequences' and who 'conceived imperfectly the stern causal concatenation of the course of the world and human condition. There is much that is improbable in nearly all his plays, much faulty psychology and offence to realism—and hence limit to artistic development'.⁷ The cause of all this Rümelin finds in Shakespeare's scanty education and meagre knowledge of the world. The ghost of improbability thus laid to rest, Shakespeare might have known some peace but Stoll takes the dilemma by the horns and makes the improbable the staple of Shakespearean drama, thus giving the most sophisticated twist to Rümelin's unaffected stand. But while disabling the tragedies Rümelin allows Shakespeare full credit for comedies because 'the qualities which hindered in serious plays serve in the comedies; when we have only to laugh and be merry, the arbitrary and impossible are welcome'.⁸ Professor Schücking has broken no new theoretic ground but has seen Shakespeare's greatness, both in tragedies and comedies, in spite of what he chooses to call 'a tendency to episodic intensification', 'lack of harmony', 'detached scenes and inserted episodes' and 'different conceptions of the same character in different scenes', that is to say, in spite of his 'primitive method',—in what Rümelin calls 'single parts'. Rümelin rejects the tragedies while Stoll finds Shakespeare's use of the improbable 'particularly welcome in a tragedy'.⁹

This is enough to make the common reader suspicious about the 'historical method' that leads to such contradictory judgments. And there is more to it. Both Rümelin and Schücking are bent upon salvaging as much of Shakespeare as possible under the limits set by psychological realism—Schücking now and then proving his rule by exceptions like Ophelia who 'is a beautiful dramatic luxury'¹⁰ and Rümelin accommodating Shakespeare by referring to his moral outlook¹¹ that deprives a villain like Iago of all his presence of mind! in the final scene of discovery. Schücking and Rümelin accept psychological realism as the only effective method of dramatic (or perhaps any kind of narrative and 'impersonative') composition and anything that seems to go against it has either to be censured or explained away or accepted in consideration of other points of merit. It is not only the German mind of the last and the present centuries that is characterized by this love of hard 'facts'. Thomas Rymer¹² fell foul of *Othello* for its lack of verisimilitude and non-observance of classical rules. Thomas Warton, though appreciating *King Lear* for its many excellences, criticised the play for its improbabilities and inconsistencies.¹³ But Rymer is perhaps the solitary exception in England who, in his dogmatic love of the classics, pours out unqualified censure of Shakespeare and tries to build up a complete critical apparatus for the appraisal of Shakespeare's tragedies in the manner of Rümelin and Schücking who, by the way, consider the whole corpus. *Othello* in parti-

cular is gall and wormwood for Rymer. And as late as the thirties of this century T. S. Eliot found Rymer's objections to *Othello* uncontroverted and incontrovertible.¹⁴ Eliot's demand for what he calls an 'objective correlative'¹⁶ and the failure of *Hamlet* to supply him with it, point, it seems, to this quest for psychological realism. J. M. Robertson's talk about the imperfect transmutation of source material in *Hamlet* is basically nothing else than this issue of probability and credibility on the plane of the verisimilar.

We know of Bernard Shaw's reaction to *Henry V*. He would not allow Shakespeare to 'thrust such a jingo hero as his Henry V down our throats'. Shaw was certainly aware of the change of attitude (hence of value) affecting the concept of absolute monarchy, during the passage of three centuries and a half since Shakespeare wrote his play and he could, on the assumption of the historical critics, have adopted the 'historical' attitude towards the play and enjoyed it in the same way as, say, Dover Wilson says he does. Obviously Schücking and Stoll could not disabuse Shaw's mind of his 'wrong modern approach'. In spite of them Shakespeare failed for Shaw while Dover Wilson does not evince the least embarrassment while responding to the following description of Hal preparing to meet Hotspur:

All furnished, all in arms ;
All plumed like estridges that wing the wind,
Baited like eagles having lately bathed,
Glittering in golden coats like images,
As full of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer,
Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.
I saw young Harry with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly armed,
Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into the seat,
As if an angel dropped down from the clouds,
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

Dr. Johnson's appreciation of the passage is understandable, especially in view of his confirmed monarchism (as the historical school would perhaps have it). but Dr. Wilson's is understandable only if we accept Schücking's position that the latter deliberately builds up in him the historical attitude and relates Shakespeare to it. That Dr. Wilson tries to construct such an attitude is demonstrated by his comments on the passage in which he says that Shakespeare, as he wrote these lines, drew upon reminiscences of 'Spenser's description of the Red Cross Knight rising lusty as an eagle from the Well of Life' with the purpose of calling up 'a vision of chivalry in its perfection', leading on to 'the

notion of regeneration'. What if we do not go to Spenser at all en route to 'regeneration'? The whole passage glitters with similes suggesting rejuvenation and the spiritual reclamation of Hal--the central theme of the play, which is again linked up, at the latter half of the passage, with the idea of the divine immanent in man and revealing itself at auspicious moments in ways that can only be described as magical. This theme of regeneration is so bound up with human life in all its important phases and in all its significant transformations, both in the life of the individual and of the race, and especially with religious experiences of mankind in all ages, that the similes in this passage do not invite the reader's attention to their particularities, but coming one after another and culminating in the magical manifestation of the divine in man, pull the mind step by step, and finally in a leap, down to the depths where lies dormant this perennial urge for a new life, ever seeking an expression. As the reader contemplates the passage, the details, as they fit in, may cause further and more varied and wider integration and assimilation, but not through any considerable reliance on historical minutiae. Mercury, Pegasus, angel and magic (witch) do not simply evoke emotions (and these may have lost all emotive value for many as witness the laments of Schiller and Elizabeth Barrett Browning as far back as the nineteenth century) but by calling up mythological associations rouse reaction in us of primordial psychological configurations round the basic desire for unimpeded progress through space and time and for heroic confrontation with those inimical forces that stand in the way, and yet offer opportunities for the display of miraculous powers of the hero.

The totality of this response to the passage cannot at the moment be all a conscious process but this can be made conscious by practice and introspection and may then be subjected to analysis. Freud by his analysis of the subconscious level of the psyche (the personal unconscious) and Jung by his analysis of the collective unconscious have proved beyond doubt that just as the body is an evolutionary product so too is the psyche and that consciousness being the latest stage in the process of psychic evolution it cannot always account for the quality and intensity of our experiences. On the other hand, Freud, unwilling to go beyond the personal unconscious, is at a loss to explain those dreams and contents of the active imagination that refer to deeper levels of the psyche and by their similarity to one another, in various case histories, unmistakably refer to an impersonal or collective basis at the lowest level of the unconscious.

C. G. Jung in the ninth volume, Part I of his *Collected Works* refers to a case of schizophrenia which reveals how beneath the surface of the rational mind and beneath the crust of normal consciousness lie psychic matters that hark back to stages of human civilization, far dis-

tant and at times prehistoric. In the present case, and in other such cases, chances of the patient coming to know these matters from previous reading or other sources of information were nil. Jung thus states the whole case:

'About 1906 I came across a very curious delusion in a paranoid schizophrenic who had been interned for many years. The patient had suffered since his youth and was incurable. He had been educated at a state school and been employed as a clerk in an office. He had no special gifts, and I myself knew nothing of mythology or archaeology in those days, so the situation was not in any way suspect. One day I found the patient standing at the window, wagging his head and blinking into the sun. He told me to do the same, for then I would see something very interesting. When I asked him what he saw, he was astonished that I could see nothing, and said: "surely you see the sun's penis—when I move my head to and fro, it moves too, and that is where the wind comes from". Naturally I did not understand this strange idea in the least, but I made a note of it. Then about four years later, during my mythological studies, I came upon a book by the late Albrecht Dieterich, the well known philologist, which threw light on the fantasy. The work, published in 1910 (there was an edition in 1903) deals with a Greek papyrus in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris. Dieterich believed he had discovered a Mithraic ritual in one part of the text. The text is undoubtedly a religious prescription for carrying out certain incantations in which Mithras is named. It comes from the Alexandrian School of mysticism and shows affinities with certain passages in the Leiden papyric and the *Corpus Hermeticum*. In Dieterich's text we read the following directions:

"Draw breath from the rays, draw in three times as strongly as you can and you will feel yourself raised up and walking towards the height, and you will seem to be in the middle of the aerial region. The path of the visible gods will appear through the disc of the sun, who is God my Father. Likewise the so-called tube, the origin of the ministering wind. For you will see hanging down from the disc of the sun something that looks like a tube. And towards the regions westward it as though there were an infinite east wind. But if the other wind should prevail towards the regions of the east, you will in like manner see the vision veering in that direction.

It is obviously the author's intention to enable the reader to experience the vision which he had, or which at least he believes in. The reader is to be initiated into the inner religious experience either of the author, or—what seems more likely—of one of those mystic communities of which Philo Judaeus gives contemporary accounts. The fire or sun-god here invoked is a figure which has close historical parallels, for instance with the Christ-figure of the Apocalypse. It is therefore a

"representation collective", as are also the ritual actions described, such as the imitating of animal noises, etc. The vision is embedded in a religious context of a distinctly ecstatic nature and describes a kind of initiation into mystic experience of the Deity.

Our patient was about ten years older than I. In his megalomania, he thought he was God and Christ in one person. His delusions were mainly religious, and when he invited me to blink into the sun like he did and waggle my head he obviously wanted to let me share his vision. He played the role of the mystic sage and I was the neophyte. He felt he was the sun-god himself, creating the wind by wagging his head to and fro. The ritual transformation into Deity is attested by Apuleius in the Isis mysteries, and moreover in the form of a Helios apotheosis. The meaning of the "ministering wind" is probably the same as the procreative pneuma, which streams from the sun-god into the soul and fructifies it. The association of sun and wind frequently occurs in ancient symbolism.

It must now be shown that this is not a purely chance coincidence of two isolated cases. We must therefore show that the idea of a wind-tube connected with God or the sun exists independently of these two testimonies and that it occurs at other times and in other places. Now there are, as a matter of fact, medieval paintings that depict the fructification of Mary with a tube or hose-pipe loming down from the throne of God and passing into her body, and we can see the dove or the Christ-child flying down it. The dove represents the fructifying agent, the wind of the Holy Ghost.

Now it is quite out of the question that the patient could have had any knowledge whatever of a Greek papyrus published four years later, and it is in the highest degree unlikely that his vision had anything to do with the rare medieval representations of the Conception, even if through some incredibly improbable chance he had ever seen a copy of such a painting. The patient was certified in his early twenties. He had never travelled. And there is no such picture in the public art gallery in Zurich, his native town. (pp. 50-52)

In this case the content of the collective unconscious has split off from the unified totality of the psyche and it has not been possible for the patient to integrate this content and yet retain his balance. He is a schizophrenic because the unconscious and the conscious strata of his psyche are in conflict with each other and the unconscious has permanently beaten down the conscious self. Could he have retained his balance he would most probably have developed into a mystic practising occult disciplines. The stirring of the unconscious in his present predicament overwhelmed his conscious whereas in the case of poetic evocation a fine integration is effected—both for the poet and the reader. Is it through an intuitive understanding of the point that

Shakespeare spoke of the fine frenzy of the poet,—distinguishing it, on the one hand, from the lunacy of the mad man whose split psyche, having lost its powers of integration, is unable to interpret for itself and assimilate the primordial images now bubbling up from the unconscious and therefore “sees more devils than vast hell can hold”,—and on the other, from that of the lover who projects his own psychic image on the external object and, naturally, all unconscious of this projection “sees Helen’s beauty in a brow of Egypt” and becomes a slave of his own projection? He too cannot consciously integrate the stirrings of his unconscious. The typical case is that of the respected professor of seventies who runs away with a red-haired model of seventeen and the fact that he is not called ‘mad’ is that the lunacy is so ordinary that those who will call him mad “are in love too”. Even when he seems to confess: “My Mistress eyes are nothing like the Sunne./Currall is farre more red, than her lips red” and though, he says, he knows “Therefore I lye with her, and she with me./And in our faults by lyes we flattered be”, “———yet by heaven I thinke my love as rare”. The lover in Shakespeare’s sonnets seems to have attained a rare poise at times, as in no: 129, yet Jung cites the example of a rejected lover who, unable to bear the shock, goes to commit suicide in a river and sees a great vision, but he does not turn into a poet. He ends up in a lunatic asylum. The lover had not the mental power to integrate the vision and thus gain a real spiritual poise. The case is a decisive one and invalidates Freud’s stand that the poet’s activity is a kind of neurotic functioning. Freud’s method of reducing everything to primitive or morbid urges altogether ignores the question of qualitative changes and differentiations. When an adult sucks his thumb unawares, it is, according to Freud, a regression to the oral phase of auto-erotism. All right. But one must also remember that a child’s way of apprehending the objective world around him, at least at the initial stages, is primarily by the mouth. It puts everything into its mouth—be it an ant or a centipede. It concentrates on the object as its teeth and tongue start operating. The adult, when he sucks his thumb, may do so, because it helps him to concentrate on the matter in hand. The habit has thus undergone a qualitative change in the adult and it has a functional value for the adult in as much as it helps him in fixing his attention on the object or the idea. Thus going back to causes or infantile motives may not help at all. Motives differ in the child and the adult. And the acme of absurdity is reached when Freud is found to hold the view that sculptors and painters illustrate the case of sublimation of the anal retentive phase. Here ‘sublimation’ is of no help in understanding the psychic process of a sculptor or a painter because it begs the question. What we want to know is precisely this motive for sublimation, whether of oral or of anal or of whatever

phase Freud may postulate. Freud not only fails to place properly in his scheme the psychic function usually called 'artistic inspiration' but, following his reductive method, has made the brilliant discovery that the artist too "longs to attain to honour, power, riches, fame, and the love of women ; but he lacks the means of achieving these gratifications" and that finally his artistic creations bring him all these. Thus the artist wants woman's love. He cannot get it (why, none can tell. Is he an invalid or a psychotic?). He writes on love and gets it. But how does he come to write and wherein does he differ from an ordinary lover, sunk in his infatuation. And why does the lover go to commit suicide and not to write the poetry of great grief? Let us hear Jung speak of the case already referred to:

'I am reminded of another mental case who was neither a poet nor anything very outstanding, just a naturally quiet and rather sentimental youth. He had fallen in love with a girl and, as so often happens, had failed to ascertain whether his love was requited. His primitive participation mystique took it for granted that his agitations were plainly the agitations of the other, which on the lower levels of human psychology is naturally very often the case. Thus he built up a sentimental love-fantasy which precipitately collapsed when he discovered that the girl would have none of him. He was so desperate that he went straight to the river to drown himself. It was late at night, and the stars gleamed up at him from the dark water. It seemed to him that the stars were swimming two by two down the river, and a wonderful feeling came over him. He forgot his suicidal intentions and gazed fascinated at the strange, sweet drama. And gradually he became aware that every star was a face, and that all these pairs were lovers, who were carried along locked in a dreaming embrace. An entirely new understanding came to him: all had changed—his fate, his disappointment, even his love receded and fell away. The memory of the girl grew distant, blurred ; but instead, he felt with complete certainty that untold riches were promised him. He knew that an immense treasure lay hidden for him in the neighbouring observatory. The result was that he was arrested by the police at four o' clock in the morning, attempting to break into the observatory.

What had happened? His poor head had glimpsed a Dantesque picture, whose loveliness he could never have grasped had he read it in a poem. But he saw it, and it transformed him. What had hurt him most was now far away ; a new and undreamed-of world of stars, tracing their silent courses far beyond the grievous earth, had opened out to him the moment he crossed "Proserpine's threshold". The intuition of untold wealth—and could any fail to be touched by his thought?—came to him like a revelation. For his poor turnip-head it

was too much. He did not drown in the river, but in an eternal image, and its beauty perished with him'.

This splendid inner vision or image would not have swallowed up his conscious personality, his balance, either temporarily or permanently, had he not an inherent weakness, and once his conscious self disintegrated, he lost control over the image. But the great poet's

'.....delights

Were dolphin-like, they showed his back above

The element they lived in'.

He is not inflated and does not identify himself with the image in the way this lover did or the other paranoid who took himself for God. He has the capacity to disengage himself from the image and contemplate it, so to say, to draw it up from the dark depths of the unconscious into the light of the conscious, ordering self and finally to give utterance to it in a language understood by all and thus the experience of the one becomes the experience of many.

In the passage from *Henry IV* the overt objective references may have undergone over-valuation or under-valuation or their denotations may have changed but the ranges within which such references may continue to discharge their poetic functions in spite of these changes can never be delimited because the less naturalistic the appeal the greater is the possibility of the evocation of archetypal images from the collective unconscious-images that do their work regardless of spatial or temporal differences, regardless of the fact that we no longer look upon monarchs as divine viceroys whose person are inviolable and who symbolise on this mundane plane not only the cosmic order but divine glory too. Of course it is given to great poets alone to dive down into the unconscious, to let his imagination play round and upon the primordial images that keep stirring there and then finally to draw them up to the plane of conscious charity without succumbing their numinous value in the way the lover or the paranoid schizophrenic did. For, two things must be remembered in regard to this primordial image. When it stirs in the unconscious it is all an undirected and involuntary process and no amount of conscious efforts can ever evoke or stir such an image. The conscious mind has normally no control over it. The poet has the peculiar power, not of stirring or activating the unconscious, but once it is stirred, of withdrawing his conscious powers inwards and groping, at first vaguely, then with greater certainty, his way to one or other fragment of the image bubbling up from the depths, and next of clutching to it and going deeper and deeper down by active i.e. directed imagination; finally of drawing it up to the conscious and giving the fullest expression to it that can be shared by those who do not stand or fall by psychological realism alone. Not only is such a literary or artistic product not limited by

space and time in regard to its appeal but it has a numinous effect both on the writer and the reader. They feel that something of extraordinary value is revealed to them though this cannot be formulated otherwise than in the artistic product itself.

Wordsworth discovered this truth for the romantic period when he spoke of throwing over the "incidents and situations from common life", "a certain colouring of imagination whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect". It is this 'unusual aspect', this numinosity that makes the experience valuable, that makes the poet feel that he sees 'into the life of things'. Coleridge made the same point when describing the nature of what he chooses to call 'The Secondary Imagination'. "It dissolves, difuses, dissipates, in order to recreate. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead". The image or the symbol, that the imagination first gets into touch with, is living, as contrasted with outer objects that are dead. And as the imagination 'bodies it forth' and "gives to airy nothings a local habitation and a name", it is something vital or numinous for the reader too. And Wordsworth also saw that such a symbolic experience when communicated, recognises no limitations of space and time: "In spite of differences of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed, the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time".

This enigma of the mysterious relationship of the object to the subject thus defies any rigid formulation and we can only take our stand on the reality of the psychic event and can say nothing else about the objective reference except that there is a correspondence between subject and object and this too in a very relative too. The Marxist attempt at reducing the psyche to an epiphenomenon (of course the attempt is as old as philosophy itself and Marxism is mentioned here as the latest variant) is as untenable as the other extreme that the conscious segment of the psyche is the whole psyche. There are artists and writers who choose (either deliberately or un-awares) to contemplate only the conscious level of the psyche and they are stirred to creativity by the contents of the conscious stratum of the psyche. These are the psychological realists. Their approach to their material may be work-a-day or unusual as witness Jane Austen or Scott, the writer of the *Arden of Feversham* or Thomas Heywood in his *A Woman Killed With Kindness*. The same writer may adopt one or the other way yet all the time remaining a psychological realist. G. B. Shaw is unusual in his avowedly anti-romantic play *Arms and The Man* while his *Mrs. Warren's Profession* is verisimilar. It has

been customary to call these two approaches realistic or romantic or more loosely classical and romantic. But as romanticism is often characterized by contents that fly in the face of psychological realism, these conventional opposites are here eschewed. Classicism too, in so far as its emphasis is on stasis, on clarity and on poise is akin to psychological realism, to the verisimilar but naturalism (or realism) and classicism differ in their acceptance of the areas or strata of the psyche for purposes of representation—Jane Austen in her *Pride and Prejudice* and Dickens in his *David Copperfield*. Agnes is not certainly a dweller of the realm of psychological realism yet we cannot say that she is unconvincing or unsatisfying. On the other hand she seems to be more real than the so-called realistic counters of credible novels. In a way therefore both classicism and romanticism may have one thing in common and that is their non-reliance on psychological realism, when so prompted. On the other hand the neo-classicism of Pope never even dreams of deviating from the verisimilar. What about Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, by the way? It will not do to call it 'satire' or 'irony' and give it the go-by. The *Gulliver's Travels* is not another Dunciad or Hudibras. Its appeal is quite different and its fantasy seems to uncover deep layers of truth inaccessible to psychological realism. But it belongs to the classical period of English literature.

Jung thinks that the literature that draws its material from the conscious plane of the psyche and accepts only psychological realism as its method and mainstay is a genre by itself. The *raison d'être* of such literature is probability and statistical average. He distinguishes it from the literature that stirs us to the depths and yet violates probability and the conventions of psychological realism. The former he calls psychological and the latter visionary. The laws of the one do not apply to the other and it is not only futile and unhelpful but misleading to say that Shakespeare or Sophocles knew the art of hoodwinking the audience into accepting the improbable as probable for the time being and thus achieving their effects, at least for the age in which they wrote, and may be, for all ages, in view of the alleged fact that thrill and surprise is what men have always sought and will seek, and that the improbable in a drama or a novel provide it. Indeed the very assumption that the function of the writer is to create illusions of truth, to make the shadow look like the substance is unwarranted. The art-world is neither real nor unreal in the ordinary acceptance of the two terms. This is true both in regard to psychological and visionary modes. What differentiates the two is the area or stratum of the psyche from which the material is drawn and the mode of representation in each case. The miracle of appeal in the visionary mode is not effected semistically. The unattached emotion is, on the other hand, an absurdity. The appeal is effected through that potency of the word that

transcends the semiotic value and reaches and activates the eternal symbols of the collective psyche called "Archetypes" by Jung.

Jung describes the psychological mode thus:

'The psychological mode deals with material drawn from the realm of human consciousness—for instance, with the lessons of life, with emotional shocks, the experience of passion and the crises of human destiny in general—all of which go to make up the conscious life of man, and his feeling life in particular. This material is psychically assimilated by the poet, raised from the commonplace to the level of poetic experience, and given an expression which forces the reader to greater clarity and depth of human insight by bringing fully into his consciousness what he ordinarily evades and overlooks or senses only with a feeling of dull discomfort. The poet's work is an interpretation and illumination of the contents of consciousness, of the ineluctable experiences of human life with its eternally recurrent sorrow and joy. He leaves nothing over for the psychologist, unless, indeed, we expect the latter to expound the reasons for which Faust falls in love with Gretchen, or which drive Gretchen to murder the child! Such themes go to make up the lot of human kind; they repeat themselves millions of times and are responsible for the monotony of the police-court and of the penal code. No obscurity whatever surrounds them, for they fully explain themselves. Countless literary works belong to this class: the many novels dealing with love, the environment, the family, crime and society, as well as didactic poetry, the larger number of lyrics, and the drama, both tragic and comic. Whatever its particular form may be, the psychological work of art always takes its materials from the vast realm of conscious human experience—from the vivid foreground of life, we might say, I have called this mode of artistic creation psychological because in its activity it, nowhere transcends the bounds of psychological intelligibility. Everything that it embraces—the experience as well as its artistic expression—belongs to the realm of the understandable. Even the basic experiences themselves, though non-rational, have nothing strange about them; on the contrary, they are that which has been known from the beginning of time—passion and its fatal outcome, man's subjection to the turns of destiny, eternal nature with its beauty and its horror'.

The passage quoted from *Henry IV* is not obviously a specimen of the psychological mode. Its appeal reaches far beyond its semantic or semiotic range. No historical approach can do justice to it nor is any historical approach strictly necessary for its full impact. On the other hand, the experience of the reader, as he contemplates the passage, goes deeper and deeper down and widens till it reaches a level of collective symbols organising themselves in an unpredictable way and filling the reader's mind with the glow of remembrance of things past, yet

never having occurred in the individual's life, and of insight into values, either forgotten, or lying dormant and therefore inoperative on the conscious level. Such is the case again with Mercutio's Queen Mab Speech in spite of Schucking and G. I. Duthie's simple notice of it in his introductory essay to the play in the New Shakespeare series. J. I. M. Stewart criticises Schucking but he too finally closes the issue with "Mercutio's Queen Mab speech conveys the strong impression of a set piece, and must always have done so", which means that in spite of what may be said in favour of its being there in the drama it is a piece of decoration, valued more for its own sake than for its dramatic relevance—almost like Polonius's 'To thine own self be true.'

Schucking's charge is that it is not in character while for others it is undramatic, just an indulgence of fancy issuing out of Mercutio's seething brain. Of course the Romeo-Mercutio contrast on the one hand and the Romeo-Juliet and Mercutio-nurse contrast on the other have been noticed. That the night-time atmosphere and the deity of dreams should go together is also perhaps admitted. That it offers a pause before the gallants including Romeo plunges into the 'night's revels' with which should 'begin his fearful date' ending ultimately in his 'untimely death' has perhaps escaped the notice of many. And against Schucking's objection that such a coarse fellow as Mercutio cannot utter such a fine speech elaborating 'the magical microcosm of animate nature' J. I. M. Stewart has made the very pertinent point "that the gross jests very generally delighted in by young men are often in the more finely touched redeemed by play of wit and fantasy which may very well have other and purer embodiments as well". He has also noticed that Mercutio's whole speech very characteristically "comes to rest in a bawdy image".

So much for character and motive on the plane of psychological realm. A penny enough, I think, for the old guy. But is Mercutio's speech just this and no more? The way we respond to the speech as we 'chew upon it' carries us farther than character and motive, as these are understood on the naturalistic plane, can take us and the rhapsody acquires a value of its own, not as a set speech, but as a revelation of some urge or impulse in us, embedded under many layers of civilised, domesticated life, yet throbbing with life at an effective touch. Mercutio symbolises this impulse in us and in so doing stirs our unconscious in such a way that our response transcends all naturalistic demands and limitations.

In what she does Queen Mab is a female Puck. As Titania dreamt the ass was a creature finer than the fairy king and as Bottom dreamt a dream that no ass of a man could ever hope to decipher so do the lovers in this speech "dream of love" due to machinations of this fairies' midwife. But "what fools these mortals be!" and Puck finds it huge

fun to tease all the mortals he comes across out of their wits. To make mischief has always been a fairy's prerogative. But just as Puck helps human mortals to fulfil their dreams so does Queen Mab here help various groups in their wish-fulfilment. But, in spite of Freud (and he himself admitted it in a way, later on) dreams have the other function of compensating the one-sidedness, rigidity and temporary overvaluations of the conscious mind. A soldier who is very proud of his shaggy beard may dream of its being nibbled off by a little mouse. Thus the unconscious tries to maintain the balanced sway of the psyche. Queen Mab gallops away every night, fulfilling in dreams the conscious desires of the lover, the courtier, the lawyer and ladies. These are wish-fulfilments but there can here be no question of inhibition in these cases. These in a way let off the undischarged energy and yet fill the dreamers with discontent and frustration in subsequent conscious life. This leads to morbid and unnatural indulgence but Queen Mab's wrath falls on the sexual delinquent whose lips are disfigured with blisters. Next comes real wish-fulfilment dreams—inhibitions finding release in sleep—the courtier "smelling out a suit" and a parson securing a new benefice. Next comes the cowardly soldier, the Miles Gloriosus, who, through his bravado, develops a sort of one-sidedness and is helped on by his unconscious with a dream that exposes his timid interior. After another Puck-like mischievousness Mab brings her gallop to bawdy close.

The progress of Queen Mab as described by Mercutio cannot but remind one of Jaques's description of the 'Seven Ages' of man in *As You Like It*. In none of his 'ages' is man happy and comfortable. None of the dreams delivered by Mab of men's or women's brains make for ease or relief. Mercutio again refers to four of Jaques's seven characters, with this difference that for Mercutio these are not phases of the same character and that they are not mentioned in the same order. But it is the very nature of Mab to turn things topsy-turvy and the order does not really matter. But Jaques's cynicism is poles apart from Mercutio's adolescent irresponsibility and relish of bawdy. The whole speech, as it describes the various pranks of the tricky Queen Mab, comes to an occasional pause, first at the end of the description of Mab's waggon, then after 'ladies dreaming of kisses' and lastly at the end, after 'entangling the sluttish hairs'. Every time her waggon gets going again it is with a bawdy theme, the last bawdy image with which the peroration ends being the toment point sexual bawdy can ever reach, unless of course it is Mercutio's rejoinder to the nurse's "Is it good den?" in Act II, sc. iii:

'Tis no less, I tell you ; for the bawdy hand of the dial
is now upon the prick of noon.

Indeed Mercutio's friends, like Beatrice's in *Much Ado*, never feel safe when he is in their company. Nobody knows how he will start it and

put them all out of countenance and finally, not only get over their resistance but carry them along with him on the irrepressibly wanton way of tricksterism. Why talk of others when even Prince Hal himself could not resist Falstaff? For 'banish plump Jack, and banish all the world'. They are "gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon, and let men say we be men of good government, being governed as the sea is by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal". that is to say, they are 'moon-struck'. And when the moon comes near the earth, people go mad. Not only does the moon help Mab in equipping herself for her nightly chariot trips but Romeo and Juliet meet in moonlight and as Juliet goes in at the nurse's call Romeo sighs

O blessed blessed night! I am afeared,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

Is it a far cry from this dream to the dream which, Mercutio says, Queen Mab induces in lovers? From the tricks of the trickster to seriousness and responsibility? The moon is changeable but so is life and, she being the mistress of the night, it is her 'watery beams' that do the work of collars and bind together the world of insects, the lowest of the animal stratum visible to the naked eye. Queen Mab's equipage consists of contributions of the insect world and these contributions, though they have nothing refined and ethereal about them, take on an unearthly quality as the watery moon-beams play upon them to the droning of the gnat. Mercutio's crudity, starting with things, earthy and smelling of the soil, fills lovers brains with dreams (Romeo's with dreams of Rosaline) which are finally transmuted to Romeo's very serious dream of blessedness in Juliet—from things earthy to things heavenly.

Mercutio's peroration thus evokes the central theme of the play—the passage of love rooted in physical urges to one of symbolic or ineffable dimensions—and Mercutio by calling up the primordial image of the trickster fills us with a sense of release because it effects the catharsis of all the accumulated energy of the spirit of the 'carnival', in us lying dormant and inhibited, deep down in the collective unconscious. This is probably why his 'Queen Mab's stirs us so much, however critics might deny its dramatic relevance and criticise its alleged 'uncharacteristic' nature. And Mercutio has the typical trickster-like end by the unexpected and unjust thrust at his breast under Romeo's armpit. He has really no further business in the play once Romeo outgrows the unpredictable, often destructive prankishness of youth which Mercutio symbolises. Mercutio is the simple Hans in Grimm's *Tales* who becomes King Romeo after the sea-journey i.e. death.

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Pope In The First Quarter Of The Nineteenth Century

A. D. Choudhuri

I

CONTEMPORARY English opinion of Pope's poetry was always influenced by that of his character. He was the most discussed literary personality of his time, and praises and abuses were showered on him on different counts. On the continent he was discussed more for his alleged deism than for his literary excellence. The French journals, along with Crousaz, took a lead in discovering unorthodox ideas in Pope's poems. However, in England, apart from personal attacks, Pope's reputation as the greatest poet of the Augustan age was unchallenged. His remarkable gift for polished expressions, his grasp of the world around him, his urbane and sensitive appreciation of certain aspects of sophisticated society and his concern for the finished and the faultless were in tune with the taste of the age he lived in. The nineteenth century, however, witnessed a revaluation in the appreciation and estimate of poetry and a shift of emphasis from the polished and the restrained to the spontaneous and the imaginative. Spontaneous expression of passion, interest in the wild beauties of nature and a sense of pity for the common man's sorrow set the tune for the new poetry. Pope's poetry came under fire and he was found wanting. There was a growing suspicion that he was too urbane to be natural and spontaneous, too restrained to be passionate and imaginative, too much concerned with the magic of the word to have any real depth of feeling. He was still acknowledged as a master of satire, but satire was recognized as a minor branch of poetry. The heroic couplet, which came to perfection in his hands, lost its functional purpose, and blank verse was thought to be peculiarly suited to express poetic flights. Even the exquisite artistry of his verses was regarded as a compensatory virtue balancing his deficiency in poetic fire. His interest in the civilized man was interpreted as his lack of interest in the natural man, and his moralising tone was thought to be too heavy and ponderous a load crippling the 'viewless wings of poesy'. These critics of Pope were exploring new avenues of thought and expression

and naturally they were unsympathetic to his poetry and technique of expression.

But even before the nineteenth century, at about the middle of the eighteenth, the question was asked. Joseph Warton insisted that 'the Sublime and the Pathetic are the two chief nerves of all genuine poesy' and he asked, 'What is there very Sublime or very Pathetic in Pope?' He thought that what Voltaire had said of Boileau precisely characterized Pope, "laborieux, severe, precis, pure, harmonieux, il devint, enfin, le poete de la raison."¹ In estimating Pope's excellence as a poet Warton deplored that sufficient attention was not given to the difference between a "man of wit, a man of sense and a true poet." He elaborated further, "Which of these characters is the most valuable and useful, is entirely out of the question: all I plead for, is, to have their several provinces kept distinct from each other; and to impress on the reader, that a clear head, and acute understanding, are not sufficient, alone, to make a Poet; that the most solid observations on human life, expressed with the utmost elegance and brevity, are Morality, and not Poetry: that the Epistles of Boileau in Rhyme, are no more poetical, than the Characters of La Bruyere in Prose; and that it is a creative and glowing imagination, "acer spiritus ac vis", and that alone, that can stamp a writer with this exalted and very uncommon character, which so few possess, and of which so few can properly judge".² He considered Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton as the highest poetic geniuses in the English language. What should be Pope's place in this hierarchy of poets? At the end of his long discussion on Pope he asks the question proposed at the beginning of his dissertation. "Where then, according to the question proposed at the *beginning of this Essay*, shall we with justice be authorized to place our admired Pope? Not, assuredly, in the same rank with *Spencer, Shakespeare* and *Milton*: however justly we may applaud the *Eloisa* and *Rape of the Lock*; but considering the correctness, elegance, and utility of his works, the weight of sentiment, and the knowledge of man they contain, we may venture to assign him a place, *next to Milton* and *just above Dryden*. Yet, to bring our minds steadily to make this decision, we must forget, for a moment, the divine *Music Ode* of Dryden; and may perhaps then be compelled to confess, that though *Dryden* be the greater genius, yet Pope is the better artist".³ When Warton's edition of Pope's Works was published in 1797 he judged the poet of Twickenham from this point of view, and his comments and observations were practically the same. Warton opened a fresh chapter in contemporary Pope criticism in that he heralded the voice of the new criticism in his emphasis on passion and imagination. The Romantic more or less accepted the verdict of Warton that Pope was correct and elegant but certainly not a poet

endowed with the gift of imagination or passion. This criticism of Pope led to the question whether Pope was a poet at all, if his poetry was anything more than moralised verses, whether he was anything more than a laborious and clever craftsman.

It is, however, interesting to observe that in the first quarter of the nineteenth century a good deal of battle was fought regarding the quality of Pope's poetic genius and his achievement. This involved fundamental questions of importance—the criteria of evaluating poetry, the purpose of poetry, the relationship between morality and creative imagination. The Rev. William Lisle Bowles, not only attacked Pope's poetry but he established himself as something of a character-assassinator. In the last volume of his edition of Pope, he recorded his 'concluding observations on the Poetic Character of Pope'. These observations, a direct extension of Warton's views, merit closer scrutiny for they gave rise to the famous literary controversy. Bowles contended that images drawn from what is beautiful or sublime in the works of Nature are more beautiful than those drawn from art; poems, dealing with the passions of the human heart are more likely to be greater than those portraying incidental and transient manners. A description of a forest is more poetical than that of a cultivated garden, and the passions of an Eloisa are "intrinsically more poetical" than the characters, incidents and modes of artificial life. Bowles, however, qualified this statement by observing that the subject alone does not constitute poetical excellence, the execution is also to be taken into account.⁴ A poet must be physically fit and keen in his faculties to observe the beauties of nature. Pope, because of his physical infirmities, was incapable of observing natural beauties but was well suited to record indoor life. Bowles asserted, "no one can stand pre-eminent as a great Poet, unless he has not only a heart susceptible of the most pathetic or most exalted feelings of Nature, but *an eye attentive to, and familiar with, every external appearance that she may exhibit, in every change of season, every variation of light and shade, every rock, every tree, every leaf in her solitary places.* He who has not an eye to observe these, and who cannot with a glance distinguish every diversity of every hue in her variety of beauties, must so far be deficient in one of the essential qualities of a Poet. Here Pope, from infirmities and from physical causes, was particularly deficient. When he left his own laurel circus at Twickenham, he was lifted into his chariot or his barge; and with weak eyes and tottering strength, it is physically impossible that he could be a *descriptive* Bard. . . . But how different, how minute is his description, when he describes what he is master of: for instance, the game of Ombre, in the Rape of the Lock? This is from *artificial life*; and with artificial life, from his infirmities, he must have been chiefly con-

versant: But if he had been gifted with the same powers of observing outward Nature, I have no doubt he would have evinced as much accuracy in describing the appropriate and peculiar beauties, such as Nature exhibits in the Forest where he lived, as he was able to describe, in a manner so novel, and with colours so vivid, a game of Cards.”⁵ Although these observations were on the lines of Warton’s views on poetry and Pope, Bowles was not at one with Warton that Pope’s poem should be compared with great poetry. “Nevertheless, as Pope has chosen to write Satires and Epistles, they must be compared, not as Warton has, I think, injudiciously done, with pieces of genuine Poetry, but only with things of the same kind. To say that the beginning of one of Pope’s Satires is *not poetical*; to say that you cannot find in it, if the words are transposed, the “disjecti membra poetæ”—is not criticism. The province of Satire is totally wide; its career is an artificial life; and therefore, to say that Satire is not Poetry, is to say an Epigram is not Elegy”.⁶ It is worth nothing that while Warton compared Pope’s poetry with what he thought the highest poetical achievement in the English language, Bowles considered him only in the area of Satires and Epistles and thought it an injustice to compare his poetry ‘with pieces of genuine poetry’! Again, Bowles’s observations on the *Essay on Man* were different from the opinions of the Augustans. While the Augustan critics were greatly interested in the philosophy or doctrine of the poem and often directed no more than a cursory glance at the exquisite poetry of the work, Bowles considered the *Essay*, primarily, as a piece of artistic work and was full of praise for the images, “the address, the sublime interspersions of description, and the nice and harmonious of every word, and of almost every line”. He did not hesitate to say, “All these *illustrative* and *secondary* images are painted from the source of genuine Poetry; from Nature, not from Art. They therefore, independent of powers displayed in the versification, raise the *Essay on Man*, considered in the abstract, into *genuine poetry*; although the *poetical* part is subservient to the *philosophical*”.⁷

Thomas Campbell felt called upon to reply to some of the charges brought against Pope’s poems by the Rev. Bowles. In the first volume of the *Specimens of the British Poets*, Campbell in his ‘Essay on English Poetry’ alluded to Bowles’s criticism that Pope’s images were drawn more from art than from nature, and said, “the faculty by which a poet luminously describes objects of art, is essentially the same faculty, which enables him to be a faithful describer of simple nature; in the second place, that nature and art are to a greater degree relative terms in poetical description than is generally recollected; and thirdly, that artificial objects and manners are of so much importance in fiction, as to make the exquisite description of them no less character-

istic of genius than the description of simple physical appearances".⁸ Campbell thought that Nature 'means life in all its circumstances—nature moral as well as external' and referred to the spectacle of the launching of a ship as an example of the sublime object of artificial life. Ridiculing Bowles's assertion that the true poet should be familiar with 'every rock, every tree and every leaf' he said, "Every rock, every leaf and every diversity of view in nature's variety! Assuredly this botanising perspicacity might be essential to a Dutch flower painter; but Sophocles displays no such skill, and yet he is a genuine, a great, and effecting poet. Even in describing the desert island of Philoctetes, there is no minute observation of nature's hues in secret places".⁹ Bowles replied to Campbell in a pamphlet. "I beg you to observe, Sir," the priest protested. "I do not say that works of Art are in no instance *poetical*; but only that what is sublime or beautiful in works of nature 'is more so'. The very expression 'more so' is a proof that poetry belongs, though not in the same degree, to both.... Let us examine the ship which you have described so beautifully. On what 'does the poetical beauty depend? not on *art* but Nature. Take away the waves, the winds, the sun, that in association with the streamer and sails, make them look so beautiful! Take all poetical associations away, one will become a strip of blue bunting, and the other a piece of coarse canvass on three tall poles".¹⁰ The Reverend asked Campbell whether he thought the description of a game of cards was as poetical as the description of a walk in a forest, whether passions of the human heart were not a higher source of what was pathetic or sublime in poetry than habits or manners in an artificial society. After these questions relating to 'principles of poetical criticism' Bowles observed, "I fear it would be thought impertinent to ask you at what University you acquired your logic".¹¹

Such an interesting and provocative literary controversy could not go unnoticed by the literary journals of the day. *The Quarterly Review* in its July issue of 1820 devoted more than twenty-five closely printed pages to the Rev. Bowles and his Letter addressed to Thomas Campbell. It was a very spirited vindication of Pope (and his defects) and in the course of the discussion the Reviewer made some pertinent comments relating to basis question of literary appreciation. He quoted Bowles's principal contention that "images drawn from what is beautiful and sublime in *nature* are more *poetical* than images drawn from art....the *passions* are more adapted to poetry than the manners" and then observed, "Such an artificial test is repugnant to the man of taste who can take enlarged views, and to the experience of the true critic. In the contrast of human tempers and habits, in the changes of circumstances in society, and the consequent mutations of tastes, the objects of poetry may be

different in different periods; pre-eminent genius obtains its purpose by its adaptation to this eternal verity; and on this principle, if we would justly appreciate the creative faculty, we cannot see why Pope should not class, at least in file, with Dante, or Milton".¹² The Reviewer then attacked Bowles. "It has frequently been attempted to raise up such arbitrary standards and narrowing theories of art; and these 'criteria' and 'invariable principles' have usually been drawn from the habitual practices and individual tastes of the framers.... It happened, however, that Pope preferred *indoor* to *outdoor* nature; but this require inferior skill or less of the creative faculty than Mr. Bowles's *Nature*? In Pope's *artificial life* we discover a great deal of *nature*; and in Mr. Bowles's *nature*, or poetry, we find much that is *artificial*. On this absurd principle of definition and criterion, Mr. Wordsworth, who is often by genius so true a poet, is by his theory so mistaken a one".¹³ Contending that Pope brought to perfection the classical vein of English poetry he made some pertinent comments in defence of the Augustan taste in poetry. "Whenever any class or any form of literature has touched its meridian, Art is left without progressive power; there are no longer inventors or improvers; excellence is neutralised by excellence, and hence a period of langour succeeds a period of glory. At such a crisis we return to old neglected tastes, or we acquire new ones which in their turn will become old; and it is at this critical period that we discover new concurrents depreciating a legitimate and established genius whom they cannot rival, and finally practising the democratic and desperate arts of a literary Ostracism.... It is not the shadows of the imagination and the spectres of the passions *only* which are concerned in our poetic pleasures; other sources must be opened, worthy of the dignity and the pride of the Muse; and to instruct and reform, as well as to delight the world by the charm of verse, is only to 'reassert her ancient prerogative', and to vindicate her glory".¹⁴ The passages quoted above are relevant to literary questions. But there were testy references to rural editors, provincial authors, "liable to a sort of literary hypochondriasm",¹⁵ "the contest *a l'outrance*, with the appearance, though assuredly not with the reality, of personal hostility",¹⁶ "mysticism in the language of his criticism, nebulous as the dreams of a Muggletonian or a Swedenburghian"¹⁷ and "the black art of criticism".¹⁸ Moreover, Bowles in his *Life of Pope* criticised Pope's personal life, his money-getting passion, his unfriendly, ungenerous acts, his relationship with Martha Blount and above all his unreliable character. The Reviewer vindicated Pope's honesty and character took Bowles to task for 'sly insinuation, the obscure hint, the damning fact anxiously recorded.... to aggravate common infirmities into officiousness, and to tear away the veil from sanctities of domestic life'.¹⁹ Out came Bowles's *A Reply to the char-*

ges brought by the Reviewer of Spence's *Anecdotes* in *The Quarterly Review*. It was issued in *The Pamphleteer* (1820), Vol. XVII, No. XXXIII and dedicated to William Gifford, editor of *The Quarterly Review*. This pamphlet hardly recorded any interesting literary discussion. It was almost wholly devoted to self-defence regarding his presentation of Pope's life. Meanwhile, in the February issue of *The London Magazine* an attack on Bowles was launched in a review of Spence's *Anecdotes*, where he was described as seizing every opportunity to degrade Pope's character and writing by gross insinuations and flippant sarcasm. The general defamation of Pope's character, Mr. Bowles only shares with Curl, and Gildon, and Welstead, and Weston; but the inquisition which he has instituted into the poet's attachment to Martha Blount, is eminently his own; and though the pruriency with which his nose is laid to the ground, to scent some taint in their connexion, and the anatomical minuteness with which he examines and determines on the physical constitution of Pope, might, in charity, be deemed only unseemly or unbecoming in a layman, and occasional critic—in an editor and a clergyman such conduct appears to us indecent and insufferably disgusting".²⁰ The author of this review was the same as that of a pamphlet entitled, *Gilchrist's Answer to Bowles* which was out shortly after Bowles's *Reply*. Bowles's reply to *Gilchrist's Answer to Bowles* was, quite expectedly, full of personal attack and bitterness, devoid of any literary interest. At the end of the pamphlet the satirical composition, *GILCHRISIAD* is certainly enjoyable:

Gilchrist, proceed, to other hearts impute,
The feelings that thy own foul spirit suit:
Round thy cold brain, let loathsome demons swarm,
Its dulness into life to warm,
Then with a visage halfgrimace, halfspite,
Run howling, "Pope, Pope, Pope",—howling, bite.
Reckless, thy hideous rancour I defy,
All which thy brain can brood, thy rage apply,
And thus stand forth spite of thy venom'd foam
To give thee Bite for Bite, or lash thee limping home.²¹

Bowles continued his *Observations* in the next issue of *The Pamphleteer*, and here he mainly concentrated on literary questions. But apart from one or two fresh stresses this was a long rehash of old arguments, boring assertions and sarcastic comments. He was convinced that passion was the most essential part of the higher order of poetry and "he who exerts his talents on the highest poetical subject; he who sustains a flight equal to that subject; who, in pursuing it, executes the high conception that 'speaks with an everlasting voice'; he who thus conceives and executes a great and transcendental subject, will stand superior to him who may have displayed as much judgment and

powers of execution on a gayer and a more evanescent subject ; and therefore Milton, and Dante and Homer, and Shakespeare must stand in the intrinsic excellence of their art, superior to Pope, though they could not have described as well the subject he has treated so exquisitely".²² He referred to the critic's opinion that changes of circumstances in society brought about definite mutation of taste and power of appreciation and that the favourite poet of a period might not appeal so much to the sensibility of a different age. "Indeed", exclaimed the Reverend. "I marvel then, what could have made Homer the Eternal Father of Poetry, amidst all contrast of human tempers and habits, in all the changes of society, in all mutations of taste... Contrast of 'tempers and habits, changes of circumstances in society, mutation of tastes' ! These, not, passions, imaginations, affections, are the most sublime and beautiful objects of poetry, and these are all *changeable*, as changes of society, and mutation of "taste" operate! These are at least, some objects of poetry, which are not *different in different* periods! What does the True Critic think of the Sun and Moon? of the "Morning Stars", that shouted together at the birthday of the world, and glow in their watches, from that hour to this?"²³ Bowles thought that the higher principles of poetry were eternal and invariable, for the verities of life eternal.²⁴ The SEQUEL to this *Observations* is devoted to Octavius Gilchrist's second *Answer to Bowles* which was published in the meantime. The tone and subject-matter of this SEQUEL may be grasped by the reader from its opening paragraph. "I would here willingly have concluded everything I had to say, but the reptile which first defiled the London Magazine is here again!

"Ecce Iterum Crispinus"

I shall not go on with the other part of the quotation, nor will his ravings probably be noticed further by me. I therefore here bestow ten minutes' attention to his second "Answer to Bowles", merely to show, how *impotent* his malice is, and how easily I could put my foot not in anger, but in disdain, upon his head, as "old Noll has it'!"²⁵ Fifteen closely printed pages of *The Pamphleteer* discussed Gilchrist's character and Pope's life. No question of any literary interest is discussed in the SEQUEL.

II

The next phase of the controversy is important for every student of Pope for it involves one of the greatest personalities of the time, Lord Byron. But before that we must have a general idea of Byron's poetic ideals and attitudes.

Byron's belief in classical values in life and poetry is well-known. He had a keen hatred of what he alleged as the obscurities and

confusions of the 'Lakers'. But it must be underlined that his castigation of Wordsworth ('this arch-apostle of mystery and mysticism') and Coleridge ('the bard who soars to elegise an ass') does not mean the denial of their genius. For us the importance lies more in the reasons which made him decry the Romantic poets, rather than in separate criticisms of individual poets. In the Preface to the second edition of the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* Byron explained his attitude. "But the unquestionable possession of considerable genius by several of the writers here censured renders their mental prostitution more to be regretted. Imbecility may be pitied, or, at worst, laughed at and forgotten; perverted powers demand the most decided reprehension". Byron disliked in poetry anything too vague or personal and the peculiar profession of the Romantics seemed to him to be trading in them. He delighted in the vigour and clarity of the classics, the liberal, humanistic tradition of Greece. He wanted to infuse into contemporary English poetry something of the heroic energies and values that enshrine the works of Shakespeare and Milton, and he considered the Lake poets deviating from that great tradition. In his critical review of current poetry in the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* his unqualified approval of Crabbe ('though nature's sternest painter, yet the last') should be read in this light—he admired him as much for his genius as for his ideals and attitudes. In the *Hours of Idleness* he defended the set of values and the general framework of tradition which he thought worth preserving. His genuine admiration for real achievement and his contempt of popular approval are witnessed incompositions included in the *Hours of Idleness* :

I seek not glory from the senseless crowd ;
 Of fancied laurels I shall ne'er be proud :
 Their warmest plaudits I would scarcely prize ;
 Their sneers or censures I alike despise.

(Answer to some elegant verses)

Although these verses were the "fruits of the lighter hours of a young man who has lately completed his nineteenth year" they certainly demonstrated the quality of the mind and taste of the young poet :

Fictions and dreams inspire the Bard
 Who rolls the epic song ;
 Friendship and Truth be my reward—
 To me no bays belong ;
 If laurelled Fame but dwells with lies,
 Me the enchantress ever flies,
 Whose heart and not whose fancy sings ;
 (L'amitic est l'amour sans ailes)

Later, in the *Hints from Horace* Byron advises poets to follow the classical ideal rather than the romantic effusion:

Dear Authors! suit your topics to your strength,
And ponder well your subject, and its length;
Nor lift your load, before you're quite aware
What weight your shoulders will, or will not, bear.
But lucid Order, and Wit's siren voice,
Await the poet, skilful in his choice;
With native eloquence he soars along,
Grace in his thoughts, and music in his song.

He admired Pope because he thought that Pope represented best the classical qualities of sense, harmony and clarity. Writing to Murray on September 15, 1817 he said, "With regard to poetry in general I am convinced, the more I think of it, that he (Moore) and *all of us*—Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Moore, Campbell, I—are all in the wrong, one as much as another; that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system, or systems, not worth a damn in itself, and from which none but Rogers and Crabbe are free, and that the present and next generations will finally be of this opinion. I am the more confirmed in this by having lately gone over some of our classics, particularly *Pope*, whom I tried in this way—I took Moore's poems and my own and some others, and went over them side by side with Pope's, and I was really astonished (I ought not to have been so) and mortified at the ineffable distance in point of sense, harmony, effect and even *Imagination*, passion and *Invention* between the little Queen Anne's man and us of the Lower Empire". About three years later on March 29, 1820, he impatiently wrote to Murray, "I have lost all patience with the atrocious cant and non-sense about Pope, with which our present blackguards are overflowing, and am determined to make such head against it as an Individual can, by prose or verse; and will at least do it with good will. There is no bearing it any longer; and if it goes on, it will destroy what little good writing or taste remains among us. I hope there are still a few men of taste to second me; but if not, I'll battle it alone, convinced that it is in the best cause of English literature". The statement is significant: Byron defends Pope "in the best cause of English literature", convinced that it will encourage "what little good writing or taste remains amongst us". Along with this letter to Murray he sent a "note" on Pope in which he referred to "the harmony of Pope and Dryden", and observed that "the exquisite beauty of their versification has withdrawn the public attention from their other excellences, as the vulgar eye will rest more upon the splendour of the uniform than the quality of the troops.

It is this very harmony, particularly in Pope, which has raised the vulgar and atrocious cant against him; because his versification is perfect, it is assumed that it is his only perfection; because his truths are so clear, it is asserted that he has no invention; and because he is always intelligible, it is taken for granted that he has no genius. We are sneeringly told that he is the "Poet of Reason", as if this was a reason for his being no poet. Taking passage for passage, I will undertake to cite more lines teeming with *imagination* from Pope than from any *two* living poets, be they who they may".

The Rev. Bowles was one of the victims of the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. 'The maudlin prince of the mournful sonneteers' was described as

Delightful Bowles! still blessing and still blest,
All love thy strain, but children like it best.
'Tis thine, with gentle Little's moral song,
To sooth the menia of the amorous throng!
With thee our nursery damsels shed their tears,
Ere miss as yet completes her infant years:
But in her teens thy whining powers are vain;
She quits poor Bowles for Little's purer strain.

And then followed the famous lines which Bowles himself quoted during the controversy:

The first of poets was, alas! but man.
Rake from each ancient dunghill ev'ry pearl,
Consult Lord Fanny, and confide in Curll;
Let all the scandals of a former age
Perch on thy pen, and flutter o'er thy page;
Affect a candour which thou canst not feel,
Clothe envy in the garb of honest zeal;
Write, as if St. John's soul could still inspire,
And do from hate what Mallet did for hire.

Byron now published a letter from Raveena, dated February 7, 1821 in answer to the Rev. Bowles's *Invariable Principles of Poetry* (1819). In fact, Byron composed two letters, but the second was not printed until 1835. He attacked the very title of the Rev. Bowles's pamphlet. "I do hate that word 'invariable'. What is there of *human*, be it poetry, philosophy, wit, wisdom, sciences, power, glory, mind, matter, life or death, which is 'invariable'? Of course I put things divine out of the question. Of all arrogant baptisms of a book, this title to a pamphlet appears the most complacently conceited."²⁶ He emphatically

opposed Bowles's contention that only nature could be the object of art, and works of art were definitely inferior to and dependent on nature for their glory and significance. Byron's reply urged the limitations of bare nature to arouse our admiration and passion. "But am I to be told that the 'nature' of Attica would be *more* poetical without the "art" of the Acropolis? of the temple of Theseus? and of the still all Greek and glorious monuments of her exquisitely artificial genius? Ask the traveller what strikes him as most poetical, the Parthenon or the rock on which it stands? The columns of Cape Colonna, or the Cape itself? The rocks at the foot of it, or the recollection that Falconer's *ship* was bulged upon them? There are a thousand, rocks and capes, far from picturesque than those of the Acropolis and Sunium in themselves; what art they to a thousand scenes in the wider parts of Greece, of Asia Minor, Switzerland; or even of Cintra in Portugal, or to many scenes of Italy, and the Sierras of Spain? But it is the "art", the columns, the temples, the wrecked vessel, which give them their antique and their modern poetry, and not the spots themselves.... It appears to me that St. Peter's, the Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Palatine, the Apollo, the Laocoon, the Venus di Medicis, the Hercules, the dying Gladiator, the Moses of Michel Angelo, and all the higher works of Canova, are as poetical as Mont. Blanc or Mount Aetna, perhaps still more so, as they are direct manifestations of mind, and presuppose poetry in their very conception; and have moreover, as being such, a something of actual life, which cannot belong to any part of inanimate nature, unless we adopt the system of Spinoza, that the world is the Deity."²⁷ Referring to Bowles's contention that the game of cards described in *The Rape of the Lock* is necessarily inferior as a poetic theme to a forest walk, Byron contended that a poet is to be ranked according to his execution and not according to his selection of subjects. He then considered one of Bowles's contentions that didactic art is necessarily of lower order. It must be, however, remembered that Byron never equates ethical values with the narrow and limited appeal of didacticism. "In my mind the highest of all poetry is ethical poetry, as the of all earthly objects must be moral truth".²⁸ He ridiculed the insistence of the Romantic school on "imagination" and "invention" and made the famous remark that an "Irish peasant with a little whisky in his head will imagine and invent more than would furnish forth a modern poem".²⁹ Byron deprecated the contemporary fashion of crying down and thought that none equalled him in the mock heroic and the ethical poetry. Ethical poetry is "the highest of all poetry, because it does that in *verse*, which the greatest of man have wished to accomplish in *prose*".³⁰ At the end of this historic letter Byron rose to characteristic heights of eloquence. If Great Britain is swept away from the face of

the earth by any great natural convulsion "an Englishman, anxious that the posterity of strangers should know that there had been such a thing as a British Epic and Tragedy, might wish for the preservation of Shakespeare and Milton ; but the surviving world would snatch Pope from the wreck, and let the rest sink with the people. He is the moral poet of all civilisation ; and as such, let us hope that he will one day be the national poet of mankind. He is the only poet that never shocks ; the only poet whose *faultlessness* has been made his reproach. Cast your eye over his productions ; consider their extent, and contemplate their variety ;—pastoral, passion, mock-heroic, translation, satire, ethics—all excellent and perfect".³¹

In answer to Byron's violent reaction to his *Observations* the Rev. Bowles published *Two Letters to the Right Honorable Lord Byron*. The letters are tedious, undistinguished and meticulously careful: it is difficult to go through them, specially after the impassioned eloquence of the poet. But his tone was respectful and language restrained. "So I might say, Lord Byron, and my two late assailants,—Apollo, Midas and Punch,—are indeed fearful odds against a country clerk and provincial editor".³² One observation, however, is of some importance and we must agree that he gains a point there. "Now in your letter, my Lord, you have said nothing of the Sublime of Poetry, as distinguishing the great poet, whose eminence in his art has led to this discussion ; but I affirm, that in the pathetic, as he yields, (and the distance is great), to Shakespeare, the variety of pathos in Shakespeare being considered ; yet if we view Pope's poems together, and remark his consummate *execution* of all the performed, though he is inferior to Milton, and must be so, from the *Superior Grandeur* of Milton's subject, the greater exertion of talents required, "according to the universal consent of the critics," and the equal execution ; yet in one particular branch of his art, *Sublimity*, he yields to Dryden, as well as to these great poets ; and in another particular branch of his art, the accurate representation of picturesque imagery from external Nature, he yields to Thomson and Cowper".³³

Lord Byron, however, was pleased with Bowles's good-natured acceptance of the criticism and he did not attempt any answer. A year later, one Martin M'Dermot published *A Letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles* in which he came forward to defend Lord Byron's views against those of Bowles. Ridiculing the priest he says, "no doubt, you would become as immortal yourself as Homer or Virgil, had you not come into the world so many ages after them. With regard to future immortality, however, your fame must necessarily be coexistent with theirs ; for as you were acquainted, in all probability, with this golden theory of nature, before you "began to serve your apprenticeship to the Muses", you must have studiously avoided all terms of art in your

poetical works: and as a poem, according to your inestimable theory, which so admirably dispenses with all the finer associations and creations of genius, derives "its poetical beauty from nature", and from nature alone, it is obvious, that the "poetical beauty" of your works must far exceed that of Homer or Virgil".³⁴ The pamphlet itself is insignificant but M'Dermot took pains to establish the fundamental issue. He asserted that "the sublime in description does not depend upon the sublimity of the object described, but derives its sublimity from the manner, or as you expressed it, the "execution" of the person who describes".³⁵ He brought Lord Byron to his assistance and illustrated that even insignificant topics could be rendered by great artists, "but I cannot help saying, with Lord Byron, 'Away with this cant about nature and invariable principles of poetry. A great artist will make a block of stone as sublime as a mountain; and a good poet will imbue a pack of cards with more poetry than inhabits the forests of America'. If, however, you require proofs for this assertion, I feel happy in giving you one from Virgil and another from Homer for which I acknowledge myself indebted to Mr. Payne Knight. 'There are many things', he says, 'sublime in description which are not so in reality, as there are objects beautiful in painting, which are not so in nature. No person, I believe, ever felt any sublime emotion on viewing a swarm of bees wrangling in the air; but Virgil's description of it, though strictly true, is sublime in the extreme'...."³⁶ M'Dermot contended that without the genius of the poet the most sublime object in nature would become ridiculous in description and a poet of genius might transform the most indilient object into sublime. Sublimity did not lie in the object of art but it must be traced to the genius of the poet.

In 1824 William Roscoe's edition of Pope's Works was published and in his account of the life and poetry of Pope Roscoe made some pointed references to Bowles's misunderstanding of Pope's genius and character. Bowles, in *A final Appeal to the Literary Public* published a series of letters to the Rev.—of Bath. The first six letters discussed Pope's personal character, particularly his relationship with Martha Blount. Letters VII-XVI were devoted to the discussion of the genius of Pope and as such they are interesting to us. The Rev.—of Bath sent him quotations from Roscoe to the effect that poetry depended wholly on the genius of the poet and not on the object described, that "poems on the most unfavourable subjects have, through the mere genius of their authors, been engraven on the tablets of immortality. Thus we chance the Battle of the Frogs and Mice, of Homer; the Georgics of Virgil; the Chessplay of Vida; the Bees of Rucelli; the Syphillis of Fracastoro; ... the Lutrín of Boileau; ... the Rape of the Lock by Pope; the School-mistress of Shenstone; the Task by Cowper; the

Deserted Village by Goldsmith ; and the humorous or ludicrous compositions of Butler and of Swift".³⁷ Bowles made a spirited reply to this charge by Roscoe. "The question is simply this—whether the "Frogs and Mice" could have been made by Homer himself to rank as high "on the tablets of immortality" as the "ETERNAL" Iliad ranks? Unless Mr. Roscoe, by any mode of demonstration, to me unknown, can prove this, all his reasoning is not worth one of the rushes with which the Frogs are armed! He might, indeed, "demonstrate", according to his own critical principles, the poetical importance of the "ludicrous", possibly in this manner: If Dr. Syntax, a "ludicrous" poem, be equal to the "School-Mistress", a "pleasing" poem, both are equal to "King Lear", a pathetic drama! and thus, Shakespeare, Shenstone and Syntax may be equally great Poets!"³⁸ It was not long before William Roscoe's reply to this *Final Appeal* contended that Cowper's *Task* was a good poem because the topic dealt with there was other than the *sofa*, that it was concerned with nature and human longings. Roscoe asserted that Cowper's *Task* demonstrated (if any poem could) the fact that there was no poetry except what was to be ascribed to the genius of the poet. Cowper's *Task* "throughout the whole of which, as if for the purpose of proving on what a slight and unimportant foundation so beautiful a superstructure could be raised, the poet has, on circumstances of the most common occurrence, engrafted those numerous passages which give variety and interest to his poem".³⁹ After this comment entered into very significant aesthetics. "The truth is, that neither the painter nor the poet represents objects or passions as they actually exist in nature, but the images of them, as he sees or conceives them in his own mind, and consequently it is these images *only*, which he communicates to the minds of others. This is the picturesque or poetic conception, the perfection or imperfection of which distinguishes a great artist from an inferior one. These images, selected from all the works of nature and of art, the poet arranges, elaborates, and combines, as the bee converts into a new form the substance collected from the flowers ; and it is from this immense storehouse, and not from immediate objects or individual nature, that all the great works of genius and imagination have been in general produced. Can any one suppose that the contending heroes of Greece and of Troy adopted the precise course of conduct, expressed the same sentiments, or exhibited the same passions, and in the same degree, as are attributed to them by Homer? Or that the Trojan war was anything more than the bare canvas of that magnificent picture, which he designed and coloured according to his own will ; limited only by the laws of probability, and the considerations peculiar to his subject? Where did the *originals* of Desdemona, of Ophelia, or of Juliet, as Shakespeare has represented them, exist, but in the resources of his own mind?"⁴⁰

This very stimulating controversy thus came to an end. From this brief discussion it is evident that Pope was a very much living figure in the first quarter of the nineteenth century—in spite of the prevalent dominance of the Romantic poets and their theories. When I discussed this with Professor J. R. Sutherland he pointed out that numerous editions of Pope's different works throughout the nineteenth century demonstrated the poet's undiminished popularity. Another interesting fact which I later discovered was that Pope was a great favourite with the Americans in the nineteenth century. The descendants of the sturdy Puritans particularly admired the *Essay on Man* for its ethical and Christian sentiments. It has been estimated that the *Essay* enjoyed 120 separate printings between 1800 and 1850. In England, apart from the editions, Pope was a favourite topic in the literary journals of the nineteenth century. He was certainly as controversial a figure after his death as he was in his lifetime. And that shows the vitality of the person—

That not in Fancy's maze he wan'ed long,
But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd his song.

Santiniketan, February 12, 1966

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Time and Continuity in Meredith's *One of Our Conquerors* *

Amitava Sinha

TIME is one of the most essential elements in the narrative composition of *One of Our Conquerors*. Here Meredith shows a preoccupation with time that reminds one of Fielding, Sterne, and his elder contemporary, Emily Bronte though he made certain original uses of it which are a striking feature of his art in this work.

Accepting the predominant convention of fiction, he maintained the movement of action in the novel in chronological time. His presentation of time is, nevertheless, differs from the conventional chronology of ordinary fiction in a rather arbitrary chronology, not always giving as much emphasis on the particular time where the materials are located as on the materials themselves. In this novel, Meredith places acts and events within a context of time by the clock ; the novel may thus be said to indicate a calendar of its own. The first five-hundred and ten pages (the total is five-hundred and fourteen), cover one year. Showing such clear time-units as months, fortnights, weeks, days, hours and even minutes (Whatever the experience at any place in the novel, the time when it occurs can always be realized by referring to its distance from units of time containing other experiences.) This relational presentation is the basis of the temporal localization of the action, and this is what prevents it from being arbitrarily lodged in time. Of the different units thus related to one another, the day is the most insistent, and altogether there are one-hundred and eight days (or parts thereof) presented which sometimes carry months, fortnights, and weeks in their stride. Within the days, again, there is an equal degree of awareness of the particular part of a day where an event takes place—afternoon, evening, night, morning, and so on ; this is also effected through the use of daily activities like lunch, dinner, breakfast, and the symbolically recurrent "London Walk Westward". Time within a day is also denoted by the clock symbols of hours and minutes. Then, again, beyond days, more than half the months of the year are mentioned: the two ApriIs at each end of the year, and May, August,

* All textual references in this article are to the *Memorial Edition* of the novel, London : Constable, 1910.

September, November, January, and February. The general awareness sometimes thickens into specific mentions of dates and clock-time, for particular effects. In three cases dates are mentioned: August 23, September 15, and September 23, each very important because of the events it presents, and all three significantly connected to one another. On three important occasions, again the exact time of the day along with what day it is, and in what month, is mentioned: 10 A.M. on the second day in the novel, in the first of the Aprils; 3-45 P.M. to 4-10 P.M. *via* 4 P.M. on a Sunday in the second of the Aprils; 8 P.M. on the next day. Apart from them, there are approximations to the clock-time on other occasions. The first year, composed thus, is directly followed by a second year, summarized in one page, and this is succeeded by a margin of time which is indefinite but evident to be close to the second year and terminates in the present. These indications of time should not be considered as casual and isolated: that way they can be found in every other novel. Here they stand, as is already somewhat evident from the number of days and months presented in a relational manner, as parts of a general pattern of time-awareness meticulously and scrupulously effected in the readers' minds throughout the course of the novel. The effect is laboriously produced, through information given to the reader either directly or inferentially, but seldom in an ambiguous manner, so that a complete chart of the detailed time-scheme can be prepared on the basis of the information.²

This insistent, fixing up of the action in time serves certain obvious purposes. It gives a realistic basis to the action; it largely objectivizes the narrator by limiting his freedom of doling out experiences in an arbitrary chronology of time; it causes the action to approximate something like a unity of time; finally, it gives an order and cohesion to the mass of materials presented in the novel.

However, while these by themselves show a very artistic use of chronology, there is much more to this massive reference to time than is suggested by them, and this is what constitutes its most important function. It does not just mean a spectacle of events arranged in recognizable time. Actually, it serves as an index of the awareness of the flow of time which is an important part of the *subject-matter*. This latter is not a time-awareness primarily in the readers' minds, but within the body of the narrative, integrally built into the experience, stemming largely from characters' consciousnesses.

In the main, and upto the first five-hundred and ten pages, it is an awareness of the ruthless, tense passage of time, inescapably chaining one to it, that dominates the experience. This, of course, is best illustrated by Victor, and the most perfect instance is to be had from Ch. XVI. After Victor has come out of the dying Mrs. Burman's house with Nataly, he "talked of the gold and white furniture, he just alluded

to the Cupid [figure in the clock]: reserving his mental comment that the time-piece was all astray, the Cupid regular on the swing:—Strange, touching, terrible, if really the silly figure symbolised!

.....And we are a silly figure sitting in a cab imagining such things!" (p. 491, *italics mine*.)

This is an unconscious cross-reference by Victor's mental state to the previous chapter when he was in Mrs. Burman's room, noticing the old familiar clock in a new circumstance: "Victor heard the French time-piece on the mental-shelf, where a familiar gilt cupid swung for seconds; his own purchase. The time of day on the clock was wrong; the Cupid Swung". (p. 487.)

The time on this clock symbolizes the entire sense of time in the experiences in the novel. In Victor's world, time has gone wrong, like all the "normal" values of life. He, in his self-deceptive individualism, gets himself enmeshed in a network of schemes he has designed. As a result, he sins against others and against himself, too, deserting his natural emotions and imagination, and twisting his potential faculties only to be utilized for his schemes. However, his schemes, being a departure from the norms of life and fallacious, can never be fulfilled. Therefore, active and buoyant as he is, life becomes for him an endless waiting time passing along but never fulfilling what he longs for, till he goes raving mad. The irony is that Victor is never conscious of the fact that time has gone wrong for him. Consciously, he is reactive to time: he is always so punctual, and is perpetually looking at his watch.³ But his conscious attempt to keep up to the flow of time is nothing but a defence-mechanism to ward off the uncomfortable sense of minutes, days, and months dragging on pointlessly. "The time-piece was all astray, the Cupid regular on the swung" is, actually, a symbol of Victor's own time. His clock (or watch) is correct for himself, yet his inner time-piece is wrong for his life is wrong. Victor's time, therefore, is broken up, and obviously ten minutes in Mrs. Burman's Chamber can be like a life-time, disclosing to him the terrible futility of all his years in the form of the clock-symbol where time is all wrong. This disintegration of time is a symptom of the break-up of his personality which reaches its climax when he goes mad.

Yet, the awareness of a tension in time is not Victor's alone. Most of the people in the novel for instance, keep on waiting for something to happen, in expectancy or in suspense, as time flows on, without seeming to achieve anything. Mrs. Burman, grim and impalpable, waits for Victor and Nataly to come; the Rev. Septimus Barmly keeps on waiting for Nesta's approval of him almost till the end; so does Dudley Sowerly wait for Nesta's acceptance of him; the Duvidney ladies, quiet orderly persons as they are, have to wait for an end to the problem, keeping awake through the night; Nataly waits hope-

lessly for her end; and Victor, of course, is perpetually waiting; he waits for the fulfilment of his schemes, and for release from Mrs. Burman; and so on. All these waitings hinge on Victor's activities. Therefore, not merely Victor, but others, too, although not to the extent he does so, and not so constantly, have to, at some time or the other, count minutes, hours, and days. The entire fictional world, till Victor's catastrophe, is charged with this anticipation and suspense, resulting in a tense, agonizing impression of the advance of time, and this psychological sense of time is strewn throughout the novel. Even a few examples can illustrate this. Nataly's trace is broken "thirty minutes later" (p. 305). "He [Dudley] had taken six days" (p. 319.) "At the hour of ten", the Duvidney ladies retire while Nesta waits for Skepsey; the footman returns and reports to Nesta "as late' as twenty minutes to eleven"; "two or three minutes after eleven" a feeble ring is heard (p. 404.) "The hour was nigh midnight" (p. 365) as Dartrey enters his hotel. Nataly returns home "five minutes before... lunch", and she chats till, "at quarter to three o'clock" (p. 483), Victor's carriage is ready. Mr. Buttermore carries Mrs. Burman's wish regarding the imminent interview "Her wish: ten minutes" (p. 486) and repeats it once more "'ten minutes'" (p. 487.) A dinner is over at Victor's place, and "ten minutes later" (p. 497) he and Simon start for the lecture theatre. As the Duvidney ladies keep awake through the night, "a century of the midnight rolled on" (p. 279), "the huge funeral minutes conducted their sonorous hearse, the hour", and "it struck in the bedroom Three" (p. 280.) Mrs. Burman died "according to Jarniman's report, forty-five minutes after Skepsey had a second time called for information... five hours and a half, as Colney made his calculation, after the death of Nataly. He was urged by some spur of senseless irony to verify the calculation and correct it in the minutes" (p. 509.) "Victor had minutes to spare before dinner" (p. 329.) He carefully remembers "the invitation at last, for to-morrow, Sunday, four P.M. Odd, that next day at eight in the evening I shall be addressing our meeting—" (p. 483.) Coming from the zoo, he says, "Thirteen minutes to four. I must be punctual" (p. 485.) Even his appetite perpetually "ran to the stroke of the hour abreast with Armanadine's kitchen-clock" (p. 140); "after glances at his watch", he is surprised that "Armandine was ten minutes behind the hour with her dinner" (p. 142.) He tells Skepsey, "At the office in forty minutes" (p. 9.) Later, he tells himself, "Time to be dressing: sun sets at six-forty" (p. 47.) He even thinks of his long-awaited for release in terms of time-imagery: "the very instant the clock strikes the hour of my release" (p. 495.) His time-awareness, as also that of the entire fictional world, enters into the most gruelling phase in Mrs. Burman's chamber:

"The time of the day on the clock was wrong ; the Cupid swung.

"....More than a minute of the terrible length of the period of torture must have gone: two, if not three.

"Another minute must have gone in the silence. And when we get to five minutes we are on the descent, rapidly counting our way out of the house, into the fresh air, where we were halt an hour back, among those happy beasts....

"They were certainly now on the five minutes. Now for the slide downward and outward!" (pp. 487-88.)

The acute tension of time pervades the fictional world like an atmosphere, and reaches maximum intensity on the night of Victor's catastrophe at the end of one year. It is immediately loosened after that, and the second year follows it in a rush of release from the tension, with all the freshness of a new freedom, especially for Nesta: "The night went past as a year. The year followed it as a refreshing night" (p. 511.) The perspective has changed now, and the new quality of experience has given time a new value. The speed and rush of this refreshing year is covered proportionally by one paragraph in a page (in contrast with the five hundred and ten of the preceding year.) As the second year comes to an end, and Nesta perfectly recovers from her shock, the world comes to a balance. Correspondingly, time undergoes another change in perspective, acquiring a neutral quality in the revalued world uncoloured by any particular intensity of experience, and the sense is carried by an indefinite passage of time that trails away into the present.

The varying intensity and texture of experience thus produces an awareness of time at a level different from the external, and the latter serves as an image of it. The most important thing is how Meredith establishes the axis between the experiential and the conceptual awareness of time. The time-order of the novel is not grafted on the action from the outside, but springs from within it. It springs from the sheer continuity of time, the "interminable tapeworm" as Forster calls it,⁴ that threads its way. This is the flow of time through units measured by the changing quality of the novel's experience. It is through the rendering of this process that the experiential awareness of time gradually builds up an image of itself in terms of conceptual time.⁵ This continuity is effected by presenting the facts as keeping on happening in a state of immediacy till the end is reached. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Meredith was here trying to do on a magnum scale something not very much unlike what Joyce did in his *Ulysses*; packing the action within a continuous structure of time—only here it is two and odd years instead of Joyce's microcosmic eighteen hours in a day—by taking it away from the external temporal surface.

There should, however, be no mistaken notions about the principle of this continuity of experiential time in *One of Our Conquerors* where it is not maintained at the same par throughout and is apparently broken at times. This, far from destroying the sense of continuity, actually dramatizes it. Here a little digression is felt to be necessary. It should be remembered that, the final analysis, only the *illusion* of a ceaseless continuity can be presented in fiction, but not sheer continuity itself. For, an ideal continuity can be achieved only at the expenses of motivation, accentuation, and relief, which no artist can afford to do, because even when he aims at giving maximum "presentness" to his material or at showing a pointless, chaotic world (as in some modern fictions), at the bottom of it all he tries to draw his fictional experience to a carefully ordered, artificial, and meaningful end. Besides, since the quantum of experience at a given moment is infinite, and since the moment as a concept can be an infinitesimal unit of time, a writer can at most present a limited amount of experience in what according to his particular artistic purpose is a minimum unit of time. For this, and the other reason quoted above, a novelist is always selective in his presentation of experience which necessarily entails calling off a halt to continuity somewhere, or toning it down to a diffuse effect. Even in *Ulysses*, the clock is made to stop at points, and resume continuity later on. What a good novelist aiming at continuity would do, nevertheless, is to try to make such shifts and diffusions as unnoticed as possible, so that the general effect of continuity is maintained throughout. Here the digression ends.

In *One of Our Conquerors*, these necessary curtailments and tonings—down occur naturally. Sometimes they appear to do so palpably, in the form of indefinite intervals of time. It is too natural, however, that the fissures in the texture of time would sometimes appear more boldly in a magnified time-span as in this novel, than in a smaller one. However, they are so manipulated—as will be illustrated later on—that for all their apparent palpability, their indefiniteness does not become more palpable than the general effect of definiteness. What is more important is that Meredith was avowedly selective in distributing his fictional material in this novel, as in others, wasting to illuminate certain truths emerging from the action. So he highlights those particular materials required to gather his narrative to the appointed effect, accepting the principle of selectivity curtailing continuity as one of his basic artistic conventions. Therefore, while on the total scale he aims at a general continuity, he does not strain the pace of the action to a uniform, maximum intensity of continuity. Keeping it under control, he occasionally brings the level of continuity down or short-circuits it, according to necessity, and then pushes it up or resume it presently. The degree of such an interruption is very much variable,

sometimes it may be traceable even in the rendering of a very small stretch of time—may be even a moment, but we will be concerned only with the practically recognizable interruptions. These consist in intervals of either definite or indefinite periods of time not filled up by acts taking place in the immediate present. They are of two kinds. Either they are usually short intervals continuing the same experience in their strides, so as not to discurb the effect of continuity, or passages of time which are accounted for by facts (unlike the former) summarized—not presented immediately—as with an aerial view. For the purpose of distinguishing them from one another, and for convenient description, I will call the unaccounted for, indicated intervals as “lapses”, and the accounted for, shown intervals as “passages”. How they function in preserving continuity, will be dealt later on. What matters most is that these interruptions punctuate the entire time-structure of the novel into a long series of units of continuous experience, instead of making it a mammoth monolith.

These units of experience are the staple of the continuity of time in *One of Our Conquerors*. They are made out on the basis of presenting the continuity of immediate experience *within* them. The presentation follows (a) the scenic narrative principle of showing events as they keep on happening in a period of time, (b) more frequently the principle, adopted and matured later by Joyce, of presenting the movement of a person's mental state at a given time—actually an extension of the scenic principle, and (c) adroit mixtures of the two. As a sequence of experience, thus presented, goes to an end, it sorts itself out into a certain time-length, a unit of time, to be more precise, which may or may not stand in a certain relationship to conceptual units of time.

Part of Ch. XL illustrates an extreme form of such a unit of time.⁶ Victor and Nataly have at last been summoned by Mrs. Burman to meet her at 4 P.M. on an April Sunday. After a passage of time has been covered by the earlier part of the Chapter, the unit starts in the middle of a paragraph:

“At a quarter to three O'clock Victor's carriage was at the door. He rose, he had to keep an appointment. Nataly said to him publicly: ‘I come too’. He started and nodded.....” (p. 483.)

The experience continues uninterrupted in this manner till the end of the Chapter. Victor explains to Nataly that he is going to the Zoo first to look at the animals for a “sort of relief”, and tries to dissuade her from accompanying him to meet the old woman, but Nataly remains Stubborn. They reach the Zoo, and the action thickens into the rendering of Victor's mental state, largely through animal symbols. His ruminations and emotional meanderings end as he finally prepares to go to Mrs. Burman, and once more tries to dissuade Nataly, but

with no avail. Their conversation, mixed with Victor's thoughts, closes as the carriage draws to the old lady's doors, first her butler and then her priest receiving them. The conversation between the latter and Victor, who recognizes the details of the above, takes the little party to Mrs. Burman's chamber where she, like a dreaded shadow, is found sitting, "a heap of shawl-sheathe over the sofa". With "wide arbits for Sunken eyes", looking "burnt out" (p. 487.) The two are left alone with her, and the situation continues ponderously for just ten packed minutes, largely impelled by Victor's acute sense of the slow vassage of time is musing punctuates staccato bits of conversation ending in Mrs. Burman asking them to pray with her. As the prayer goes on, Victor gets merged into a reverie where he even loses the sense of time. The reverie ends with the prayer, and after some conversational scraps the gruelling situation comes to an end, in p. 490. as they turn away and the "black door closed behind them".

The significant thing about the flow of this whole experience is that it is absolutely uninterrupted, never summarised, except at two places ("up to the gate——Victor was arguing", p. 484; "after entreaties and reasons intermixed.....", p. 485) which, however, are almost imperceptible in the total effect. The length of time covered by this uncurtailed flow of experience, from the beginning till the end, makes up what I have called a unit of time: in this it happens to stand in an exact relationship with time in terms of universal units which happens to be one hour and twenty-five minutes (from quarter to three to ten minutes past four.) It is the same essential principle of continuity that makes up the other units of time, although they are not always so tautly, tensely continuous.

However, these units do not stand merely together in an isolated manner. Rather, the principle of continuity within them constantly and forcefully impels them to apprehend one another. The gaps between them are not in a state of vacuum, but are dramatized by intervals of time, of two kinds distinct from one another in function: in one kind the interval of time is merely stated, which I will call as "lapses" of time, and in the other the interval is *shown* as a fact, which I will call as "passages". Both kinds, however, carry some sameness of theme or experience, which connects the preceding and the succeeding units continuously. A lapse, merely stating such an interval passed, is, however, always of short duration which sandwich the preceding and the succeeding units through the suggestion of the sameness of material; in it is adopted a method that very much resembles the cinematographic device of splitting a scene into two immediate sequences through a "cut". The passages are more important and numerous. A passage, actually presenting common themes or experiences in its stride from

unit to unit in a blurred form, syncopates the units together. The device of carrying continuity is filmic, too, and is the most important one in the novel. A unit, always presenting immediate action, fades *out* to it through a common material between the two as the view of the action is focussed at a greater distance than before ; as the passage comes to an end, it fades *in* to the next unit likewise through some fact it shares with the unit, as the view again closes up on the action. While Meredith's fictional art does have an occasional similarity to the filmic crafts, the flexibility of the narrator's view in this novel gives it a special resemblance to the Camera, and the two other main devices of preserving continuity between the units are similar to cinematagraphic techniques also flash-back, and montage—the principles of uniting two different objects on a common point. However, thus propelled, the units of time constantly push themselves into larger and larger structures of time, like circles on the water, until they tend to resolve into a general continuity.

The first few chapters, among the best known in this novel, give a good instance.⁷ Victor, crossing London Bridge, has a fall, as the novel opens on an April noon. Hauled up, and after having got into an unwelcome row with a commoner, he proceeds again to cross the Bridge, ruminating in a semi-reverie which goes on through some minor and unimportant interruptions, as he goes on crossing the Bridge, from the first to the second chapter, through sixteen pages, till he becomes aware of the voice of his friend Simon at his ear. They talk, and decide to have lunch and drink at a restaurant and walk into a haberdasher's shop, and the unit, continuous in the presentation of all this, ends here. Next is another unit of time (chs. III-IV, pp. 17-36) presenting a scene with Victor drinking Old Venge with Simon at the Old Venge, and conversing. This is followed by still another unit (chs. V-VI, pp. 36-57) which starts with Victor having resumed his solitary journey and musings, and ends with the domestic scene at his house where his journey gradually leads him to. In between these three units there are two "lapses" of very short time. At the end of the first unit Victor's awareness comes to the external level from inner musings, and the heartily sensuous man he is, he talks and thinks in terms of eating and drinking ; the second unit opens with a deliberate and forceful presentation of his sensuousness in the form of the champagne-drinking episode, and the first unit, pressed near to the second by the shortness of the interval passed, continues into it through this sameness of theme. The second unit ends with the note of buoyancy effected by the champagne, and specially in Victor, the third unit opens with a strong sense of colour, warmth, and bubbling self-confidence distinguishing Victor's thoughts from what they were before the Bachanalian episode. The second unit, sandwiched

to the third by the very short interval, is made to continue into it by this unity of experience. Together, the three units thus result in a larger stretch of continuity from page 1 to page 57, and meanwhile time rolls on through afternoon into evening.

A more complex instance of a large time-structure in which two strands of experience are simultaneously presented in one continuity of time, and in which time moves back as well as ahead, is seen in a series of units, the first of which starts with ch. XXXI in p. 365.⁸ Skepsey, heading for Brighton in a train, and lost for some time in his musings, meets the Rev. Septimus Barmby travelling in the same compartment. After the two get off the train at the station, the Rev. vanishes, having informed the other of his intention to meet Nesta presently. Skepsey goes ahead and meets Dartrey; by and by the focus shifts to the latter, and it is with the view of Dartrey that the unit ends in p. 379. A number of acts are covered by the view as from a distance, taking place in a passage of several hours to which the unit has faded out; the view, however, is still essentially on Dartrey, on the eve of going to Mrs. Marsett, which carries the continuity on. In the next chapter and in the page the focus closes up again, but it is still on Dartrey, and this leads on to a unit on the same morning, presenting the scene between Dartrey and Mrs. Marsett, to which the passage has faded in. This unit, again, fades out to a passage of several hours in p. 385, when Dartrey is seen from a distance (first by Mrs. Marsett, then by the narrator and the reader) leaving her place, and then going to Major Warrells's house to be informed that he might meet the latter at the club, which in its turn fades in to another unit, as the focus moves down to a close and immediate view of Dartrey in the club. The unit ends with the chapter as Dartrey, walking with Col. Sudley, meets Nesta and the Rev. Septimus coming towards them near the pier in p. 388, and it is through this meeting that the unit is continued into the next one. In this latter the action steps off the meeting back in time to where the Rev. met Nesta after he had left Skepsey in the form of a flash-back. From there the action works its way *continuously* onward, presenting the scene between Nesta and the Rev. where the latter divulges her parents' secret, till the unit comes to an end in p. 394 at the point of the meeting presented earlier in the previous unit, but mentioned here once more. This is in the form of a curve, this second strand of experience, which is *montaged* to the first (the Skepsey—Dartrey line of continuity) through the meeting which is also the springboard from where the flash-back took off.⁹ Continuity now stems from this unit which has replaced the Dartrey-lines, and forges ahead to meet other units.

It has been seen how these units of experiential time form their images in the units of external time through their contrast with them. Similarly,

as they keep on continuing towards one another, they project themselves against external time, finding their image there. Thus, the time-structure of Victor's journey across London Bridge to home finds an external shape in the passage from afternoon to evening. In the other time-structure noted above, the extent of the experience continuous there can be gauged by comparative reference to the external time covered—a length of time from early morning till near lunch-hour—which actually serves as its image. However, the structures of time keep on expanding, as has been explained before, and the image keeps growing on. Eventually, the process comes to very large time-structures recognizable imagistically into numbers of consecutive days, separated by indefinite 'passages' and 'lapses' of time.¹⁰ However, exactly in the manner as noted in the examples above, these time-structures apprehend one another through 'fades' out and in across these passages and through 'cut's across the lapses. Finally, they resolve into a total structure of one year, from April to April, the image of a long span of agony and spiritual groping, and continues still forward to the passage of the second year, the image of spiritual release and freedom, through a colossal fade-out.

A fuller recognition of the psychological time-element in the novel is necessary here, for a complete understanding of the growth of the image from this point onwards. It should be realized that Meredith was not interested merely in the hori-movement of time in order to render experiential time, and his underlying tendency was to totally annihilate chronology wherever possible. All experiential time tends, subtly and ultimately, towards timelessness, since, as it is known, time loses all value in an ideal order of experience. So great was Meredith's interest in the inner depths of experience that instead of scratching its surface, he probed as far beneath it as possible. This urge led him to push experiential time to an awareness of timelessness which constitutes what may be described as a vertical movement of time independent of the horizontal chronology.

At first he achieves this in catching the eternal, ideal moment of ecstasy from where all consciousness drops off as the intensity of experience gathers itself into an extreme point. This moment appears in the scene in Mrs. Burman's chamber in Ch. XL where the awareness of time arrives at its most feverish stage, near the end of the first year, on the eve of its final break-up, as Victor keeps counting the terrible ten minutes, and after that, suddenly time is not:

"It acted on him like the silent spell of service in a Church. *He forgot his estimate of the minutes, he formed a prayer, he refused to hear the Cupid swinging, he droned a sound of sentences to deaden his ears. Ideas of eternity rolled in semblance of enormous clouds...*" (p. 488, *italics mine.*)

This is the perfect moment of timelessness where time has annihilated itself.¹¹ Only a little time back, he was symbolizing the clock, was commenting on time, was counting agonizing minutes. Now he forgets the estimate of minutes—his life-long habit—, wants to forget time and does forget it, and is submerged by the consciousness of eternity. The moment is not complete in itself, but carries the entire pressure of his past through which he has been tensely waiting for his release and counting time. For twenty years he has been climbing up in his career and planning how to get his for the past one year (this is the latest year in his *memory*—they one immediately before the first year in the novel) he has been, or so he thinks, maturing the final scheme for release in the form of Lakelands; in the course of the present year he has been furthering it gradually towards the climax; for forty-five minutes since quarter to three on this day he has been preparing himself for the final show-down with Mrs. Burman; for the past ten minutes, or nearabouts, he has been going through the ordeal of his life-time; and then, suddenly flashing, the release comes in this moment of freedom from time and external barriers, this is the vertical journey of time, as if seen from the broad end of a funnel, from and across points in time to the pin-point of timelessness.

The moment of reverie, however, is not the end-all of the vertical time-movement. Victor gets this release where he never expected it, and fails to recognize it as his true freedom. Therefore, as he comes back to external awareness from the rhapsody, he ignores its message, and drives himself forward to meet his devastating zero-hour on the next day. As the action laps beyond the moment and the year, it reaches forward to timelessness in another phase, as will be seen presently, where Victor's drama is transcended and looked at in a detached, total view.

The horizontal movement of time, the growing image of the experience, approximates towards meeting the vertical as the continuity proceeds from the structure of the first year through the second, and onward. The second year, as we have seen, is the image of spiritual refreshment for Nesta and the time-strung world of the novel. It also connotes the sense of increasing freedom from time in general, for the narrator, the reader, and the detached onlooker; it can be noticed how in the crucial statements bearing the weight of the passage ("The night went past as a year. The year followed it as a refreshing night," p. 511) the pace of time has grown faster, more and more unretarded by barriers of experience. The pace grows faster and dimmer still as the continuity fades out further to an indefinite passage of time which terminates, not at any fixed point in chronological time, but in the living, continuous present in the last paragraph where the amalgamated points of view of Colney and the narrator round up the story. The chronological movement loses all

conceptual meaning in the balanced, neutralized world, and therefore becomes indefinite; since external time is most definite in the present, it logically ends in the present. Side by side, the vertical rhythm achieves timelessness, but not in a moment, as the moment, which is determined by experiential intensity, is no more important in the neutralized order of experience; but since the present (the narrator's as well as the narrative's in this case) is a timeless point, it naturally ends up in the present which becomes the image common point where the two movements terminate. This point dramatizes the continuity as well, the endless advance of continuity forward now finds an image in the continuous present in the last paragraph brought out by the skilful breaking of the present tense through the past. This journey of the action from a fixed point in time to the timeless present thus becomes an enormous time-unit complete in itself, the total image of the varying texture and level of the experience.

The manipulation of time in *One of Our Conquerors* is the mature illustration of Meredith's more fragmentary but nevertheless significant concern with it in some other works as well. Here this manipulation shows him very much anticipating the modern sensibility, specially in his awareness of the breaking-up of time, of the value of time determined by experience, and, finally, of timelessness inherent in time. As he brought this awareness to serve as a structural basis, he pursued (the now old-fashioned) chronology as a convention; however, as he did so, he turned chronology inside out in an unusually imaginative treatment that proves him as the poetic novelist and the inveterate experimenter that he always was.

Time-chart

The chart brings out the nomenclatures of the different external time-units in the novel, their relationships, and the indications of continuity. The terms used for the last purpose have been explained in the body of the article. The chart is strictly based on whatever information the narrative offers about time, and on no external source. Much of this information is given directly in pages where the acts and the events occur. Much, however, is given also in pages before and after they occur, and is ascertainable cross-referentially. Some of the information, again, is obtained through inference and calculation. However, the evidences of these information have not been given here as they would be rather expensive in space for the purpose of the present article.

1. Unit: April. A certain day. Noon, till lunch-hours. (Chs. I-II, pp. 1-16.)
2. Unit: Same day. Lunch-time; after the 'lapse' of a very short time. (Chs. III-IV, pp. 17-36.)
3. Unit: Same day. Afternoon onwards, approaching evening; after a short 'lapse' of time. (Chs. V-VI, pp. 36-57.)

- 3a. Unit: Same day. Some time in the afternoon, covering almost the same time as in 3 above. Flash-back, the curve meeting the general continuity in the next unit. (Ch. VII, pp. 58-71.)
4. Unit: Same day. From evening to night, after a 'lapse' of time. (Ch. VIII, pp. 71-81.)
5. Unit: Next day. Morning, after the 'lapse' of the night. (Chs. IX-X, pp. 81-109.)
- 5a. Unit: Same day. Morning, proceeding through noon onwards, covering part of the time as in 5 above. Flash-back, the meeting the general line of continuity in 13-14 below. (Ch. XI, pp. 109-18.)
6. Unit: Same day. Night, after the 'lapse' of some time. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 118-22.)
7. Passage: Short, indefinite time. Fades in to following unit. (Ch. XII, pp. 122-29.)
8. Unit: A certain day. Afternoon onwards (Ch. XIII, pp. 129-42.)
9. Unit: 15th April. The sixteenth day since the above, after the 'lapse' of a fortnight. Fades out to following passage. (Ch. XIV, pp. 142-47.)
10. Passage: Short, indefinite time. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.)
11. Unit: Early May. A certain day. Evening. (*Ibid.*, pp. 150-52.)
12. Unit: Same day and the next. Night continuing into next morning; after the 'lapse' of a short time. (*Ibid.*, pp. 152-57.)
13. Passage: Ninth day, after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. Fades in to following unit. (Ch. XV, p. 157.)
14. Unit: Next day. From morning to night. Fades out to following passage. (Chs. XV-XVII, pp. 157-77.)
15. Passage: Indefinite, but certainly more than two weeks, ending on a certain day. Fades in to following unit. (Chs. XVII-XVIII, pp. 177-97.)
16. Unit: Next day. Afternoon. Fades out the following passage. (Ch. XVIII, pp. 197-202.)
17. Passage: Indefinite time. Fades in to following unit. (Ch. XIX, pp. 203-15.)
18. Unit: The Sunday immediately previous to the Lakelands Concert. (*Ibid.*, pp. 215-23.)
19. Unit: Part of a night, after the 'lapse' of less than a week (Ch. XX, pp. 223-25.)
20. Unit: August 23. Next day, after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. (*Ibid.*, pp. 225-37.)
- 20a. Unit: Another part of the same day, continuing upto night. Flash-back; the curve, as it proceeds forward, merges into the main line of continuity. (Chs. XXI-XXII, pp. 238-68.)

21. Unit: Next day, after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. Evening to night. (Ch. XXIII, pp. 270-72.)
22. Unit: Same day. Night. Time-*montaged* to the previous unit. (*Ibid.*, pp. 272-83.)
23. Unit: Next day, after the 'lapse' of the intervening period. Morning. (*Ibid.*, pp. 283-84.)
24. Unit: Same day, after the 'lapse' of the intervening period. Afternoon to night. (Ch. XXIV, pp. 284-88.)
25. Unit: Fourth day since the last, after the 'lapse' of the intervening three days. Evening. (*Ibid.*, pp. 288-89.)
26. Unit: Next day, after the 'lapse' of the intervening period. Morning. (*Ibid.*, pp. 290-91.)
27. Unit: Same day, after the 'lapse' of some hours. (*Ibid.*, pp. 291-92.)
28. Unit: Same day. Evening, after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 292-93.)
29. Passage: Twenty-six days, covering September 15 and September 23. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, pp. 293-300.)
30. Unit: Next day. Afternoon to night. Fades out to following passage. (Ch. XXV, pp. 301-04.)
31. Passage: Night following. Fades into following unit. (*Ibid.*, pp. 304-05.)
32. Unit: Next day. Morning onwards. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 305-13.)
33. Passage: Six days, including the previous day. Fades in to following unit. (Ch. XXVI, pp. 313-19.)
34. Unit: Part of the next day. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 317-20.)
35. Passage: Up to next day. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, p. 320.)
36. Unit: Same day, as in passage above. Office-hours. (Ch. XXVII, pp. 320-28.)
37. Unit: Same day. Evening, after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. (*Ibid.*, pp. 328-29.)
38. Unit: A certain day, after the 'lapse' of short, indefinite time. Evening onwards. (Ch. XXVIII, pp. 329-32.)
39. Unit: Next day. Morning, after the 'lapse' of the intervening night. (*Ibid.*, pp. 332-34.)
40. Unit: Same day, after the 'lapse' of some hours. Eleven o'clock onwards. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 334-43.)
41. Passage: Same day, afternoon to evening. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, pp. 343-44.)
42. Unit: Same day. Evening, dinner-time onwards. (Ch. XXIX, pp. 344-49.)

43. Unit: Next day. Morning, after the 'lapse' of the intervening night. (*Ibid.*, pp. 349-50.)
44. Unit: Same day. Later part of the morning, after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 350-51.)
45. Passage: Short, indefinite time. Fades in to following unit. (Chs. XXIX -XXX, pp. 351-56.)
46. Unit: Part of a certain day. Fades out to following passage. (Ch. XXX, pp. 356-57.)
47. Passage: Time upto next unit, including the night. Fades in the following unit. (*Ibid.*, p. 357.)
48. Unit: Part of next day. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 357-63.)
49. Passage: Very short. Part of a day (may or may not be the same day). Fades in the following unit. (*Ibid.*, p. 363.)
50. Unit: Same day, after the 'lapse' of very short time (*Ibid.*, pp. 363-64.)
51. Unit: Same day, after the 'lapse' of some time. Night. (*Ibid.*, pp. 364-65.)
52. Unit: November. Next day, after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. Morning. Fades out the following passage. (Ch. XXXI, pp. 365-79.)
53. Passage: Same day, some hours. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, pp. 379-380.)
54. Unit: Same day. Part of the morning, after the 'lapse' of some little time. Fades out to following passage. (Ch. XXXII, pp. 380-85.)
55. Passage: Same day, some hours. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, pp. 385-86.)
56. Unit: Same day, approaching noon. (*Ibid.*, pp. 386-89.)
- (52-56)a. Unit: Same day. Time as covered in 52-56 above. Flash-back-montaged to the previous unit. Fades out to following passage. (Ch. XXXIII, pp. 389-94.)
57. Passage: Same day. Very short time, till lunch. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, p. 394)
58. Unit: Same day. Lunch-hour onwards. (*Ibid.*, pp. 394-400.)
59. Unit: Same day, after the 'lapse' of very short time. (*Ibid.*, pp. 400-02.)
60. Unit: Same day. Afternoon to evening; after the 'lapse' of some time. Fades out to following passage. (Ch. XXXIV, pp. 402-09.)
61. Passage: The night following. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, p. 409.)
62. Unit: Next day. Morning. (*Ibid.*, pp. 409-14.)

- (58-62)a. Unit: Same time as covered in 52-62 above. Flash-back-montaged to previous unit. (Ch. XXXV, pp. 414-20.)
- 63. Unit: Same day, after the 'lapse' of short time. (*Ibid.*, pp. 420-21.)
- 64. Unit: Next day, after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. Morning. Forming a curve that meets the general line of continuity indirectly in 69, and directly in 77, below. (*Ibid.*, p. 421.)
- 65. Unit: Previous day. Afternoon and evening, covering part of the time in 62 above. Counter flash-back, bringing continuity back to the main line. (Ch. XXXVI, pp. 422-28.)
- 66. Unit: Same day. Night, after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 428-29.)
- 67. Passage: Same night, then morning to afternoon next day, then the following four days. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, pp. 429-36.)
- 68. Unit: Fifth day. Morning. (*Ibid.*, p. 436.)
- 69. Unit: Same day, afternoon to night; after the 'lapse' of some time. (Ch. XXXVII, pp. 437-47.)
- 70. Unit: Next day, after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. Early morning. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 447-48.)
- 71. Passage: Same day. Morning, midday-lunch-time and after. Fades in to following unit. (Ch. XXXVIII, pp. 448-50.)
- 72. Unit: Part of the same day. (*Ibid.*, pp. 450-55.)
- 73. Unit: Part of the same day, after a very short 'lapse' of time. (*Ibid.*, pp. 455-61.)
- 74. Unit: Part of the same day, after a very short 'lapse' of time. Fades out to following passage. (Ch. XXXIX, pp. 461-63.)
- 75. Passage: Same day, through dinner-time onwards. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, pp. 463-64.)
- 76. Unit: Same day. Part of midnight. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 464-69.)
- 77. Passage: Night and part of following morning. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, pp. 469-70.)
- 78. Unit: Same day. Lunch-time, and onward. (*Ibid.*, pp. 470-72.)
- 79. Unit: Same day. Presumably afternoon; after the 'lapse' of some time. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, pp. 472-73.)
- 80. Passage: Short and indefinite. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, p. 473.)
- 81. Unit: Part of a certain day. (*Ibid.*, pp. 473-77.)
- 82. Passage: Through January, February, onward. Indefinite, but about four months; after the 'lapse' of a week. Fades in to following unit. (Chs. XXXIX-XL, pp. 477-82.)

83. Unit: April. A certain day. Night. Fades out to following passage. (Ch. XL, pp. 482-83.)
84. Passage: Breakfast-lunch-hour-quarter-to-three next day. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, p. 483.)
85. Unit: Same day. Afternoon—from quarter to three to about ten past four. (*Ibid.*, pp. 483-90.)
86. Unit: Same day. after a 'lapse'—immediately after the end of the time above. Fades out to following passage. (Ch. XLI, pp. 490-93.)
87. Passage: The Night following. Fades in to following unit. (*Ibid.*, p. 493.)
88. Unit: Next day. Morning. (*Ibid.*, pp. 493-95.)
89. Unit: Same day. Dinner-time; after the 'lapse' of a short time. (*Ibid.*, pp. 495-97.)
90. Unit: Same day, after a 'lapse' of ten minutes, and onward, till a little before 8 P.M. (*Ibid.*, pp. 497-505.)
91. Unit: Same day to next day. Night-very early morning; after the 'lapse' of the intervening time. Fades out to following passage. (Ch. XLII, pp. 505-10.)
92. Passage: Same night and the consequent year. Fades out to following passage. (*Ibid.*, p. 511.)
93. Passage: Indefinite, and ending in the present. (*Ibid.*, pp. 511-14.)

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2. I have appended such a chart at the end of the article, and it should be referred to for the illustration of all the information given above, as also of the complete time-scheme.

3. His friend Fenellan reflects on Victor's "potent capacity martially after the feast to buckle to business at a sign of the clock" (p. 36.)

4. *Aspects of the Novel*, London: Edwin Arnold, 1958, p. 31.

5. I have borrowed the term "conceptual time" from A. A. Mendilow, *Time and the Novel*, London: Peter Nevill, 1952. Pp. 64-65, 118-21 of the book give a brief but enlightening account of the relationship of psychological time to external time.

6. See chart

7. See chart

8. See chart

9. This montage-flash-back combinations are an important feature of Meredith's Structural craft. For their evidences of other uses of them, refer to the chart below.

10. Altogether there are eleven such structures, separated by eight "passages" and two "lapses":

(1) 2 days—pp. 1-122, (2) 17 days—pp. 129-49, (3) 13 days—pp. 150-77, (4) 1 day—pp. 197-202, (5) 1 day—pp. 215-23, (6) 42 days (including the passage from

August to September)—pp. 223-329, (7) 3 days—pp. 329-51, (8) 2 days—pp. 356-63, (9) 11 days—pp. 363-473, (10) 8 days—pp. 473-77, (11) 4 days—pp. 482-510. See chart below.

11. This exactly resembles the Joycean "epiphany": it is curious how one is time and again reminded of Joyce while reading this novel. This is also analogous to Woolfe's "moments of being". This concern with the moment no doubt places Meredith at par with the time-conscious modern novelists. For a good exposition of the timeless moment in modern fiction, see Georgio Melchiori. "The Moment as a Time-unit in Modern Fiction". *Essays in Criticism*, III, 4, pp. 434-46, also *Mendilow*, pp. 137-38.

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TREATMENT OF S AND Z IN GOTHIC

SUBHADRA KUMAR SEN

JOSEPH Wright in his *Grammar of the Gothic Language*, considers /s/ and /z/ as two different phonemes in the Gothic language. Apparently there is nothing objectionable in this assumption. In a descriptive and practical grammar of the Gothic language such an assumption is correct. But, if we view the question historically certain basic difficulties crop up. From a consideration of the actual occurrences it is no less right to assume /z/ as an allophone of /s/, and not a distinct phoneme. The following paragraphs seek to establish that point.

Let us first briefly summarize Wright. According to Wright Gothic /s/ was a voiceless spirant in all positions like the 's' in Modern English *sin*.

Examples : (1) Initial *sama* (=same).

sibun (=seven).

(2) Medial *wisan* (=to be).

thusundi (=thousand).

(3) Final *hus* (=house).

gras (=grass).

See, *Grammar of the Gothic language*, p. 12, sec. 26.

/z/, Wright tells us is a voiced spirant in Gothic like the 'z' in Modern English *freeze*.

Examples : *huzd* (=hoard, treasure).

hazjan (=to praise).

maiza (=greater).

See, Wright p. 12, sec. 30.

Wright following Brugmann assumes that in Primitive Indo-European /z/ existed independently (i.e., as a phoneme) as a voiced spirant. This view is seriously challenged by some recent scholars. Professor Winfred P. Lehmann for example suggests that /z/ in prim. I-E. was an allophone of /s/. According to Professor Lehmann prim. I-E. /s/ had a voiced allophone when it stood before voiced obstruents. Examples : Avestan *mizdem*, : Gothic *mizdo* (=reward).

See, *Proto Indo-European Phonology*, p. 9, sec. 2.1 d.

Let us examine the case for ourselves. Prim. I-E. /s/ is preserved intact in Gothic in all positions.

Examples : *sunus* (=son) : Skt. *sunus* : Gk. *huios* : I-E. **sunu*.

saian (=to sow) : Lat. *semen* : I-E. **se(i)*.

ist (=is) : Skt. *asti* ; Gk. *esti* : I-E. **es-*

fisks (=fish). Lat. *piscis* : I-E. **peisk-*

In Gothic /z/ can occupy only one position, that is medially. It can never occur initially nor finally. From this it can be safely concluded that the Gothic /z/ was not a regular development of the original I-E. /z/, the voiced spirant. Had this been so, we could find some Gothic words with /z/ in the initial position.

A more curious thing happens when /z/ occupies the final position in a word. The final /z/ of Primitive Germanic is invariably devoiced to /s/ in Gothic. Thus we have forms like:

wulfos for **uulfōz*.

gaqumthais for **gaqumthaiz*.

Again, original I-E. z+media becomes s+tenuis in Gothic. Thus we get

* *ozdo-s* : Gothic *asts* (= a twig).

* *nizd-o* : O.H.G. *nest* (= a place of rest).

Cf. Skt. *nida*. Lat. *nidus*.

Then again Gothic shows the tendency of supplanting the etymologically regular /z/ by /s/. This tendency is most clearly noticed in the conjugation of the strong verbs :

kusum for **kuzum*.

kusans for **kuzans*.

From this it can be assumed that in Gothic /s/ and /z/ was easily interchangeable, but /z/ is retained intervocalically and in conjuncts before a voiced consonant. Gothic /z/ is a secondary development of the /s/ whether original or irregular. In our opinion then, we can have /z/ in Gothic from three sources :

(i) when intervocalic or in conjuncts before a voiced consonant.

(ii) when affected by Verner's Law.

(iii) by Zetacism.

If in Gothic all intervocalic /s/ became /z/ how then are we to account for such forms as *wisan*? Forms like *wisan* may be explained as an analogical formation. The influence may be twofold: (i) by the analogy of the levelling that took place in the case of the strong verbs, or (ii) by the analogy of the forms like *wists*. See, Pokorny p. 1171.

It may be remarked that the effect of the Verner's Law was greatly blurred by the levelling out in favour of the voiceless spirant.

Zetacism is a minor I-E. phenomenon. This again is the beginning of a larger process which affected the development of the separate Germanic languages.

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THE FAERIE QUEENE AND MODERN SCHOLARSHIP : A REVIEW

KITTY DATTA

LIKE the lunar landscape, the *Faerie Queene* remained till recently a conspicuous mass, often brilliant in appearance, which the learned, who had read it from end to end, described in imposing generalisations, and the ordinary reader avoided scanning too minutely. Everyone had an impression of variety and vastness, and of its dreamlike sequences. There was an awareness of the presence of allegory, moral and historical, and of a great scheme left incomplete. The most notable reconnaissances of the poem made earlier in the century were the great Variorum edition (Baltimore, 1932-49) to which anyone who wanted to know about the variety of opinions or interpretations offered up till then could go; and C. S. Lewis's *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford, 1936)*, which made the first complete orbit of the poem's form. Lewis had a genius for simplification, as well as for taking western culture in a wide sweep. Now younger scholars have risen to question Lewis's map in detail and his theory of allegory in general, to scan the poem's landscapes more thoroughly and minutely, and nowadays soft landings are made (as one would expect, mainly by Americans) more often than on the moon itself.

While many readers must have been introduced to Ariosto and Tasso by Lewis, he had laid stress on the poem's medieval connections, whereas another book, W. L. Renwick's *Edmund Spenser* (1925)*, had pointed up the impact of Italian poetry and Renaissance Neo-Platonism on Spenser's imagination.

One of the most notable developments in modern criticism is that Spenser, who was once considered the poets' poet *par excellence*, the poet of pure imagination and pure music, has become the poet for intellectuals. Several of the important questions being asked of the *Faerie Queene* are not exactly new, but are being asked with a new intensity. Recently its relation to medieval literature has been reconsidered (Rosemond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery*, Princeton, 1966), or the quality of its Neo-Platonism the ways in which Spenser is a Renaissance man (Robert Ellrodt, *Spenser's Neo-Platonism*, A. D. S. Fowler, *Spenser and the Numbers of Time*, 1964, Kathleen Williams,

Faerie Queene: The World of Glass, 1966), as well as an Elizabethan Protestant (A. C. Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene*, Oxford, 1961); and almost everyone had had his say on the question of the poem's structure. What is fresh is both the increased understanding of currents of Renaissance thought and taste, and the decision not to abandon the poem itself for discussion of ideas within and behind the poem. Everyone nowadays is so thoroughly schooled in the method of intensive explication, so suitable for a concentrated short poem, that it is only natural to find this method being applied to "difficult" passages in long narrative poems, and even those apparently not so complex. Besides, the approach to discovering a work's unity through its imagery, so fruitful for poetic drama, is now proving equally fruitful in unfolding the unity in complexity of the *Faerie Queene*. It is now understood better than before that if the poem, or its separate books, have an intellectual unity, this also contributes to its formal poetic unity, that one cannot decide to write about *either* the poem's ideas *or* its narrative structure and poetic texture, for they are closely interwoven. A book which makes a radical claim for this interdependence is A. D. S. Fowler's, for he argues that the symbolism of numbers, which was widely understood amongst Renaissance intellectuals (it has a history from Pythagoras through Augustine and the middle ages up to Neo-Platonism) presides over the different books of the *Faerie Queene*, and even affects the number of stanzas and lines they contain. But Spenser was a Renaissance man not only in his interest in such abstrusely fascinating matters; he was also appreciative of the kind of neo-Platonism expounded with such brilliance in Edgar Wind's *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance* (1958)* Without doubt this is the most remarkable book on Renaissance ideas and art to appear in decades, and, besides having some fine remarks of its own on Spenser, lies behind Miss Williams' study.

Wind demonstrates how the concept *discordia concors*, the harmony of opposites, which everyone knows from Dr. Johnson on the metaphysicals, was at the heart of the neo-Platonic understanding of universal harmony, creating in Renaissance art a striking tendency to tortuous complexity of form, yielding unity of meaning only after some efforts of enquiry, and to enigmatic symbolism, some of it drawing devout Christian meanings from the old pre-Christian deities. The gods certainly preside over the human histories in the *Faerie Queene*, and the goddesses even more powerfully. In her central chapters Miss Williams expounds their part with particular clarity and grace, and, since speculations on the meanings of those opposites Venus and Diana were an important part of Renaissance thinking on the nature of love, she unfolds this philosophy, not in dry abstraction, but as a drama of opposing forces and personalities. Both she and Donald Cheney

(*Spenser's Image of Nature: Wild Man and Shepherd in the Faerie Queene*, Yale, 1966) appeal to one of the central neo-Platonic concepts to describe the developing movement of the poem's narrative: love cannot exist without strife. Whatever the differences between books of the poem, this is their common rhythm, informing the arrangement of characters and the progress of the story.

The particular pair of opposites which Cheney reveals in operation from end to end of the *Faerie Queene* are opposites in the pastoral scale, the wild man and the shepherd, one nature in all its uncultivated rudeness, the other nature tamed and refined. The pastoral has itself two poles, regarded formally, the artificial and the personal, and Spenser writes between them. The wild man and the shepherd symbolise two poles of the moral life as well as the aesthetic opposites: the active virtues set against the contemplative. The category 'wild man' covers not only Spenser's savages and satyrs, but his knights whose kind of virtue derives from force and virility, transcending itself in self-control, with Hercules as their classical example. The shepherd again covers not only the poem's gentle rustics, but a knight like Arthur, and Christ as the Good Shepherd is their example. If there is any common source or nexus for these contrasts, it may be in that paradoxical linkage of action and suffering central not only to the the Christian ethic but to the classical view of the human condition as well."

None of the recent books we have mentioned so far is a beginners' book; nor is William Nelson's, *The Poetry of Edmund Spenser* (Columbia 1963)* which says many fine things about his symbolism. They all pre-suppose, not only that one has read the *Faerie Queene* from one end to the other, but that one knows something about modern discussion of the poem. As commentary, Kathleen Williams' book is least opaque to the novice (T. P. Roche's readable *The Kindly Flame*, Princeton, 1964, is concerned only with Books Three and Four), but most useful of all is probably *Elizabethan Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism** (Oxford: New York, 1967) edited by Paul J. Alpers. Two hundred of its five hundred pages are given to Spenser, and from a variety of essays, written from varying angles, some extracts from books already mentioned, some otherwise unpublished, a certain consistency nevertheless emerges. G. Wilson Knight's 1939 essay, with which the collection begins, sets some of the problems as well as announcing some of the main themes of recent criticism: the "inconsistency" and "boneless, piecemeal" form of the *Faerie Queene*, as well as its "balance in opposition or synthesis of Christian and erotic feeling", its "profound psychological meaning", and its "metaphysic of fertility". To my mind the essay from which the beginner will profit most is Roger Sale's "Spenser's Undramatic Poetry", for in an unaffected readable way it

sets forth a view of the poem which other writers develop, in a more difficult manner. For him, what Wilson Knight calls Spenser's "fluidity" is his virtue, not his vice, his evenness and unhurriedness are "the mark of his assurance that he knows what life is like", of his moral certainty—and here the sense of "moral" is "not a means of strictly dividing good from evil but of knowing the endless variety of things seen and ways of seeing open to the moral vision".

If the *Faerie Queene* is a poem about moral values, we must not make either of two mistakes. One is the mistake of interpreting the poem too schematically so that both the life and the poetry are lost. In its style thought and feeling are in continuous interplay. Sale's essay is good on this; so are the extracts from Roche's and Alpers' books. It is most necessary to understand how good allegory works. Allegory in its essence is not merely a pictorial way of presenting abstractions concretely, so that once one has learnt the lesson one can forget the medium (bad allegory is like this). In good allegory the literal level of the narrative has its own positive importance and pleasure. "The allegorical meaning is exactly the meaning presented by the narrative—no more, no less" (Roche). So it is a mistake to describe the *Faerie Queene* as some writers have done, not as a continuous allegory, but as a poem moving from allegory to realistic narrative on the one hand and to symbolism on the other. This, all of it (simple allegory, realism, symbolism) is what allegory at its best is like. "Allegory is a method of reading in which we are made to think about things we already know," (Tuve) And, we may add, in which we are made to feel them also.

Another mistake is to think that the poem is only about moral values and not about spiritual vision. From the two different angles of 16th. century theology and the allegorical tradition, A. S. P. Woodhouse and Miss Tuve clarify this matter. The high points of the *Faerie Queene* are points where the moral is transcended in intimations of visionary union.

WHO SO FIRM NOT TO BE SEDUCED

SHUDDHASHIL BOSE

BOTH *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus* focus on the power of persuasion. There are numerous instances in these two plays where a persuader, using rhetoric, overwhelms the judgement of another and makes him act according to his own purpose. The persuaders explore all verbal means at their disposal to convert other people to their own opinion, and guide them to act in a manner that generates the dramatic action of the play.

According to Aristotle's definition, rhetoric is the science of discovering all the possible means of persuasion. We may classify rhetoric into two types: (1) artistic and (2) non-artistic. Non-artistic rhetoric persuades with documents and other true records, while the other type is inventive in the sense that the rhetor, working through hyperbole, persuades the audience to something that is not true. In this paper I propose to concentrate on false-persuasion, or in other words, persuasions that are fallacious but nevertheless excellent rhetoric. If I expand my topic to the first type I would have to talk about truth and thus move into a general interpretation of the play.

Since the purpose of the rhetor of the second type is to persuade people of an untruth, he has to have a more intricate control over his method than the one who can rely on the self-evidence of truth. We can, through analyses of particular cases here, establish a general proposition that every persuasion comprise the following four constituents: —(1) The credibility or reliability of the speaker must be established at the very outset of the speech. If the speaker fails to create this image, whatever he would say would be taken with suspicion, and thus the whole persuasion speech would fall flat on the audience. (2) The speaker must induce a certain disposition in the audience. (3) The rhetor will have to substitute the unconvincing reality (of a situation or a person) by either a convincing image or a convincing metaphor in the beginning, connecting the two through a minor resemblance or overlapping, and then persuade the attention of the people away from reality into the image or metaphor. (4) At the end of the argument he will have to reaffirm the fancied identity of the two. I do not claim however that in the specific instances of false-persuasion in the play all these factors are present, the process may vary according to the situation, but I would like to confine my examination to the structural

aspect indicated above. We may find some instances of unsuccessful persuasion, unsuccessful because they fail to establish one or two essential factors I have suggested above. To illustrate my point I shall take four significant instances of false-persuasion from these plays.

It is interesting to note that in *Julius Caesar* one-twentieth of the lines are pure rhetoric. The first part of the play, that is from I, i, till III, i, is a series of persuasion directed against Caesar by Cassius, the outcome of which is the assassination of Caesar by the senators. But immediately after the assassination, the counter-force or the counter-rhetoric, that is the persuasion in favour of Caesar and against Cassius and Brutus, starts working, and finally achieves its goal by unleashing the mob against them. So we can see from the broad pattern of the play that all the persuasions are centered around Caesar, whether against or in favour of him. Keeping this debate situation in mind let us proceed to the specific instances of persuasion.

In I, i, the public of Rome are on their way to welcome and pay tribute to Caesar who is coming back victorious from Egypt after destroying Pompey's force. The tribunes who are conspirators against Caesar confront the public and send them back to work by convincing them that the war against Pompey was a wrong act, instead of rejoicing they should protest against it. Since the tribunes are well-established in the public mind as reliable people, Flavius and Marullus do not have to establish their reliability as speakers. They are already established in the minds of public. The question may arise whether in the reader's mind their reliability is established or not. I do not wish to go into this question in detail right at the moment for this is not relevant in the context of this particular paper, but let me say this that the command the tribunes have over the common people, expressed through their conversation with the mob, persuades us to accept them as important and reliable people. Moreover this is common psychology with the audience that in a situation of conflicting opinions or actions they will try to take sides with those who seem to be judicious, confident and higher in social status. Since the tribunes are in their appearance much too superior to the cobblers and tailors, the audience lend their ears to them with great confidence.

Coming back to the second factor, we find that the technique of persuasion the tribunes are using, comes very close to our general pattern. The tribunes' aim is to antagonize the mob against Caesar by persuading them that Caesar killed Pompey not for any public interest but being driven by his personal ambition to become the dictator of Rome. What Marullus and his friend do is to create the past image of Pompey, reminding the people of his great deeds and how much he was loved by the Romans. Replacing the present

Pompey with the image of Pompey of the past, they draw a fancied identity between the two and, brightening the character of the dead triumvirate, darken the image of Caesar. Marullus, creating the realm of the past, diverts the attention of the public from the consequence of the present situation, and concentrating on that proves the murder of Pompey to be an act against public consent, which is illogical because he never gives any reason of the civil war.

A similar situation we have in I, i, of *Coriolanus* which would be worth mentioning here as an instance of unsuccessful persuasion because in this case the people are not fully convinced by the metaphor used. Act I of *Coriolanus* opens with the citizens of Rome, but this time they are violent against the senate, and specially against Caius Marcius, who they think is a "very dog to the commonalty", causing starvation of the poor by depriving the common man of a proper distribution of food. To pacify the violent mob Menenius makes a speech (I, i, 65-76) where he tries to convince them that the senate is, as always, a benefactor to the public and a proper distribution of all kinds of benefit to its people is its main business. Since the people are violently hostile to the senate, it is a difficult task that Menenius, a well-known friend of Marcius, has to accomplish in attracting their attention to his speech. He addresses the mob in terms such as "my countrymen", "friends", "honest neighbours", "masters", etc. It is interesting to note that Menenius, in order to make the people hear him, addresses them first as "my countrymen", which is an implicit flattery to the mob because that implies an equality of status: he, Menenius, the senator, and they, the common people are *on par*. But that does not work because it is too subtle. So, Menenius calls them now as "friends", which is a further clarification of equality of status and amity between the senate and the people. On the violent mob this does not work either, even when he pays a compliment such as "honest neighbour", the mob does not stop shouting their slogans. Menenius finally calls them "my masters" which ensures superiority of status (a bit of the constitutional position, viz., that in final analysis, it is the general body of the people who are the source of *civitas dei*, not the senators) and the mob calms down. Establishing his credibility or reliability as a speaker, Menenius creates a cosmic image of the power and strength of the senate and warns them that to revolt against it would be as ridiculous as to revolt against heaven. Notice the cunning of rhetoric; Menenius, while trying to calm down the violent mob called them masters of the state, but as soon as they have paid attention to his speech and he has been able to cast a temporary spell on the audience by his oratory, he reverses the constitutional position. Moreover, he tries to persuade them that the government is full of good intentions towards its people and they

would lose it if they behave like ingrates. Menenius concludes his speech with a slight sentimental touch :

"The helms of the state, who care for you like fathers, when you curse them as enemies."

The rhetoric however falls flat on the violent mob because the incongruous image of a planet has not established to the point of deviating their attention from reality. He merely mentions it. Since the image could not establish its relation to the object, the speech failed.

Turning to the second use of rhetoric by Menenius in the same scene we find that he does what he did not do on the previous occasion. This time he completely absorbs the mind of the audience by telling a story which he establishes as a metaphorical version of the real situation. He compares the Roman senate, implicitly to the belly of a human body and starts talking about its function elaborately. The belly, he argues, being the source of supply of food to the other organs of the body, is the most beneficial part in the human machine. Explaining the vital activities of stomach, he comes back to the senate and draws a parallel between the two, and establishing the metaphor comes to the conclusion that people are absolutely wrong in being mutinous as it would be for the other parts of the body to be so against the belly. Menenius' metaphor does not really parallel the situation. The body-organs, according to his story, revolted against the belly because they were ignorant of its activities. They thought the stomach to be an idle organ, absolutely useless. But these people, on the contrary, are very much aware of the senate's duty, and that is all the more reason why they are revolting against its being inactive. The metaphor just deceives the audience and the rhetor intentionally establishes this incongruous relation between the image and the object, after confusing them with his story.

The mob is a foolish body and it is no wonder that it would be persuaded easily, but when a man like Brutus is on trial the situation becomes extremely complicated. In *Julius Caesar* Cassius' persuasion of Brutus should be studied carefully in this context. The motive of the rhetor, that is Cassius, is to convince Brutus that (a) Caesar, though a weaker man than Brutus and Cassius, has become the (b) dictator of Rome, (c) the remedy of which lies in killing him. In his long speech to Brutus in I, i, Cassius not only uses all the techniques of persuasion outlined in the beginning of this paper, but also includes some more things that suit the situation. First he establishes his "credibility" as a speaker by convincing Brutus that he loves him more than anybody in Rome. Since the relation of love implies faith in each other, he emphasizes this point repeatedly. Incidentally Cassius considers timing as a factor here, by which I mean, he catches Brutus at a point of dilemma when he is bothered by

Caesar's activities. Everyone has left the senate except Brutus, brooding alone, walking up and down in that huge hall with a gloomy face. This is the right moment for Cassius to trap him.

Cassius stirs Brutus' emotion by telling him that he does not find in his eyes "that gentleness and show of love", in response to which Brutus reveals his problem vaguely. Cassius takes one more step now and tells him that he needs self-knowledge and also hints at the fact that Brutus is hiding his turbulent state of mind from the one who loves him most dearly. In line 65 Brutus says:

"That you would have me seek into myself
for that which is not in me?"

which shows how difficult it is to deceive a man of his intellect by the cunning of rhetoric. None the less Cassius is undaunted. Now he begins with the question of honour, which he knows is a vital issue to Brutus, the noblest Roman of all, and would rouse pride in his heart. Having created the atmosphere, Cassius comes to the main issue, that is Julius Caesar, of whom he gives a very dark picture describing how he lost to Cassius a challenge of swimming the Tiber across, and looked like old Anchises beside young Cassius, who saved Caesar like Aeneas from drowning. This image of an old and weak man he creates focusing on Caesar's moments of weakness. The false analogy is very skillfully applied here who, creating this dark image of Julius Caesar, diverts the attention of Brutus from the real Caesar, and finally comes back and claims that the Caesar who lives in reality and the Caesar he described are identical persons. Actually, the real Caesar and the Caesar described by Cassius are two different persons, but Cassius through his power of rhetoric establishes a seeming identity of the two, and puts forward a premise the logical conclusion of which would fulfill his intentions.

After he has convinced Brutus of Caesar's weakness Cassius rouses Brutus' sentiment by reminding him of his great ancestors; he brightens his character in contrast to Caesar's, then ironically mentions that this weak personality is going to rule and dictate the ones who are much nobler and braver than he is. Here, through irony Cassius pricks on Brutus' pride and almost persuades him to his cause.

I said "almost" because Brutus never commits himself to Cassius, though he is greatly perturbed. Being a man of high intellect, he cannot possibly be swayed by other people's judgement even if it sounds convincing. So, in II.i, we find him sleepless in the middle of the night, and trying desperately to *persuade himself* that Julius Caesar is a danger for Rome and needs to be removed. But why? Why should Brutus persuade himself against Caesar? If there is any doubt the benefit should go to Caesar but not to the conspirators because he is a marked friend of the triumvirate. This question intrigues me every

time I read the play. One possible answer may be that Brutus was actually overwhelmed by Cassius' persuasion in the previous scene, but could not admit that to his own self because it hurt his ego to be swayed by other people's judgement. He has to find for himself the reason for this murder. However, in this self-persuasion we find the same process again, image replaces object, between which a forced identity has been established, and the desired conclusion is achieved. Brutus' argument follows this syllogical pattern:

1. My duty is to remove all possibilities of dictatorship from Rome. (major premise)
2. Caesar will come out as a dictator in future (minor premise ; should be challenged because there is no evidence to support it)
3. Therefore, I have to remove Caesar. (conclusion)

In III,ii, Antony's speech is one of the most famous speeches ever written, lines of which are quoted from the grade-school kid to the mayor of a city. Antony, besides following all the techniques of rhetoric, adds irony to it which, under the circumstances, becomes highly effective. He comes to the platform when the mob is thoroughly persuaded by Brutus that Caesar was ambitious and would have come out as a tyrant if he were not killed at the right time. So, at a time when the mob is furious with the Caesar-regime, Antony cannot contradict Brutus point blank by praising Julius Caesar at the very outset of his speech. He has to start very carefully ; before anything he must make the audience hear him. He says first:

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears ;

I came to bury Caesar, not to praise him."

Since Antony is known as the right hand of Caesar the people expect that he should condemn the senators for the assassination and try to glorify the dead hero in his speech, for the reply to which their physical strength would be apt enough. But it surprises everybody when Antony says that he is not there to praise Caesar but to bury him, the audience (including the ones of the Globe Theatre) become curious to hear him. Thus Antony establishes partly his reliability as a speaker in the minds of the audience.

Now he says:

"The evil that men do lives after them,

The good is oft interred with their bones:

So let it be with Caesar."

a statement which is too complicated for the mob to get a meaning out of. He praises Caesar through a riddle almost ; a statement that might be understood but not so direct as to produce a violent reaction. And moreover, as Antony has mentioned the word "evil" in connection with Caesar, he is taken as an objective man. Now he comes to

Brutus and praises him which grants him more security, and the mob calms down.

Since Antony is full of praise for Brutus, the people take him as a fellow-traveller with the conspirators. But if the people were a little more watchful they would have been able to notice that Antony has already started foiling Brutus' praise with Caesar's. Up till now his refrain "Brutus is an honourable man" is used as a shield for defence which guarantees his security, but marvellously, by exposing slowly all the good qualities of Caesar and proving his assassination to be an act of private rather than public interest, Antony, in coming back to the refrain, uses it no longer as a shield for self-defence but a weapon to kill the opponent.

However, the image Antony gives of Caesar is not a true picture of Caesar who lives in reality, he replaces the real one with the image he creates, and establishes a deceptive identity of the two, focusing on the points of overlapping of the image and reality. This should therefore be taken as an instance of false-persuasion which does not give the truth, just over-glorifies Caesar and belittles the character of Brutus. In this connection it is interesting to note, however, that although so much has been said for and against Julius Caesar throughout the play, from no one have we got a real picture of the man Caesar. We get to see him for a while in the play, but he is neither Antony's, nor 'Caesars', nor the one described by Brutus, but something else. In this connection we might remember Cordelia, who also was presented to us through others' points of view. The final impression of these personas that we obtain is a composite impression unified within our own consciousness.—But this is actually a general method of characterisation in Shakespeare. He exposes the character to us through his own action (including what he says to others), through his soliloquies, through other people's reports about him.

From the point of view of the movement of the play, or the achievement of the dramatic action, in both *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*, rhetoric plays an important role. In *Julius Caesar*, as a matter of fact, all the actions and decisions that have any dramatic significance in the play, are achieved as results of persuasion. The play has its climax in the middle, that is Caesar's assassination in the third act. The achievement of the dramatic action is preceded by a series of persuasion speeches, starting from the very first scene when the tribunes persuade the mob against Caesar. Taking into account all the decisions that have been taken by people, ranging from the mob to Brutus, we find all of them lead to the final action, or in other words, have some contribution in building up the tension that made the assassination possible. Each of them is taken under constant persuasion by some individual or by a group. Once climax is achieved the play must start its course for the

denouement, which also is achieved in this play through the power of persuasion. If Antony had not come out with his brilliant persuasion speech, how would have this drama completed its rise-and-fall course?

Turning to *Coriolanus*, we find the same thing, different as the plays are otherwise. The tribunes persuade the mob to revolt against Caius Marcius and this mass movement against him forces his exile, which is the turning point of this drama, the climax. This play reaches its denouement when Coriolanus finally decides against attacking Rome from outside as an act of revenge. Behind this decision, we must note, there is a great instance of persuasion by the mother of the protagonist, without which this dramatic decision would have been impossible, that turns the wheel of the action.

SHAKESPEARE ON THE ART OF POETRY

S. P. SEN GUPTA

A critic often said to be a poet *manque*. T. S. Eliot has said that one cannot be a good critic without being a poet. The stagirite is a poet of distinction. And as a critic he has stood the test of time. Coleridge, Shelley, Arnold and T. S. Eliot, to name only a few, have excelled in both poetry and criticism. Shakespeare's literary criticism, rich as it is, has escaped the notice of even Saintsbury, who refers to all minor critical works, which today are lost in limbo or have become bibliographical treasures, ransacked only by scholars.

Shakespeare's plays and poems are a rich quarry, where an assiduous reader comes across hundreds of gems of excellent literary criticism. Yet Shakespeare is not a conscious critic. There is no experience he can enter into. He has thought profoundly about poetry and drama, and therefore his occasional critical utterances interspersed in his works, have both freshness and profundity. In a short article it is impossible to refer to and comment upon all that Shakespeare had said on the different aspects of literature. We shall confine ourselves to his views on the Art of poetry.

Great men sometime think alike. There is nothing on record to prove Shakespeare's acquaintance with Plato. But in *As You Like It* there is a passage, which gives the lie to this popular belief.

TOUCHSTONE—Truly, I would the Gods had made thee poetical.

AUDREY—I do not know what poetical is. Is it honest in deed and word? Is it a true thing?

TOUCHSTONE—No, truly, for the truest poetry is the most feigning ; and lovers are given to poetry, and what they swear in poetry may be said as lovers they do feign.

Plato in his *Republic*, *Ion*, *Laws*, *Meno*, *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus* and *symposium* has made adverse strictures on poetry. He believes that appearances will all change, but the idea is Reality, which is unchanging. In Book II of the *Republic*, Plato says :

“And the tragic poet is an imitator, and therefore, like all other imitators, he is thrice removed.....from the truth.... He is a manufacturer of images and is far removed from the truth”.

Plato is serious ; Shakespeare is not. Touchstone does not know what he is about. And yet in his words there are distinct echoes of Plato, Aristotle and even Bacon, who describes poetry as “feigned

history". Aristotle has defended poetry against Plato's unmerited animadversious. Poetry is not feigning, Aristotle contends. Poetry is not a mere imitation. God has created man and the natural phenomena. The poet has re-created them. The poet recreates the universal element in human life. The real and the ideal are not opposed to each other. The real has many contradictions which the ideal has not. The poet with his creative vision can reproduce or re-create an ideal world. 'Imitation' is not a copy of the original. It is a creative act. The poet, is nature's rival, and he outshines her, for he creates things not as they are, but as they ought to be.

Shakespeare is rather fanciful in the passage quoted above, but his remark is a challenge to the facile optimism of the Platonic concept of poetry.

Keats believes that all charm flies away at the touch of cold philosophy. Shakespeare believes it and is never tired of having a fling at the philosophers, who have meagre faith in poetry. In *Timon of Athens* there is the character of a poet, who dedicates his work to Timon. He speaks on the different aspects of poetry, and we shall have occasion to dwell at length upon them. Apemantus a cynic philosopher meets the poet.

APEMANTUS—How now, poet !

POET—How now, philosopher !

APEMANTUS—Thou liest.

POET—Art not one ?

APEMANTUS—Yes.

POET—Then I lie not.

APEMANTUS—Art not a poet ?

POET—Then thou liest.

Again Shakespeare is laughing in his sleeves. Plato and the new-Platonists are again being exhumed for denigration.

The passage from *Twelfth Night* is in the same vein. Viola has been persuaded by the Duke to try to charm the reluctant Olivia to woo her in the Duke's name. She starts off on a splendid and magniloquent speech, which is being shortened by Olivia.

OLIVIA—Come to what is important in it : I forgive you the praise.

VIOLA—Alas ! I took great pains to study it, and 'tis poetical.

OLIVIA—It is the more like to be feigned : I pray you, keep it in.

In all the three plays referred to here, the Platonic idea that poetry is removed from truth has been emphasised.

Keats credits Shakespeare with having "negative capability". Shakespeare has the "capability" of identifying himself with all his characters, and he can yet "negate" or detach himself from them. Different characters speak differently, and Shakespeare cannot be pinned down to any of the utterances. Still we suppose, we can reconstruct Shakespeare's

poetics out of this medley. "The critical writings of poets", say Eliot, "owe a great deal of their interest to the fact that the poet, at the back of his mind, if not as his ostensible purpose, is always trying to defend the kind of poetry he is writing, or to formulate the kind that he wants to write".

Shakespeare is one of the greatest romantics. Arthur O. Lovejoy in his essay "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms", has spoken of the confusion of terminology and of thought that the literary clichés have given rise to. Different critics have different things to say about romanticism. There is, however, a consensus of opinion that romantic poetry is not made by the effort of will, but emanates spontaneously from within the mind. Poetry is the product of creative imagination, which Shakespeare has in large measure. "The imagination", says Coleridge, "is that faculty which represents objects, not as they are in themselves, but as they are moulded by other thought, and feelings into an infinite variety of shapes and combinations of power". Shakespeare has the imaginative faculty and he extolls it.

Theseus, the Duke of Athens is a matter-of-fact sort of person. A born soldier, he has waded through blood to the throne. Imagination cannot, therefore, be his strong point. He happens to go to a forest with a pack of hounds, where the four lovers are fast asleep and are awakened by the Duke's men. They tell fantastic stories of their love. Theseus, the least poetical man goes into raptures about imagination, because he believes the lovers to be imaginatively worked up.

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Stuck shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.
One sees more devils than vast hell can bold ;
That is, the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven ;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

Shakespeare in these words has emphasised the creative aspect of imagination. And yet Theseus is a soldier, who is opposed to every thing romantic. Let us not forget that he has wooed Hippolyta with the sword. In the passage under review it is not imagination alone that has been brought into focus. There is the Platonic doctrine of 'inspiration', when Shakespeare speaks of "the poet's eye, in a fine

frenzy rolling". Inspiration, Plato holds, is akin to the Greek word "enthousiasmos", i.e., to be possessed by God. In *Ion* Plato says:

"For the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him: when he has not attained to this state, he is powerless and unable to utter his oracles".

Plato continues:

"The Muse first of all inspires men herself. . . For all the good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed. And as the corybantian revelers when they dance are not in their right mind, so the lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains". The upshot of this discussion is that a poet is hardly rational. In fact, he is a man possessed; he is always in a state of divine frenzy.

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato is categorical in his statement:

"The third kind is the madness of those who are possessed by the Muses; this enters into a delicate and virgin soul, and there inspiring frenzy, awakens lyrical and all other members; with these adorning the myriad actions of ancient heroes for the instruction of posterity. But he who, having no touch of the Muses' madness in his soul, comes to the door and thinks that he will get into the temple by the help of art—he, I say, and his poetry are not admitted; the same man is nowhere at all when he enters into rivalry with the madman".

When Shelley speaks of the "harmonious madness", flowing out of his lips, he is distinctly and consciously Platonic; Shakespeare breathes the same sentiments unconsciously.

Shakespeare holds that Poetry is not the product of deliberate art. There is a general impression that classical poetry works by rules and models. The romanticists, on the other hand, maintain that poetry should be spontaneous. A true poem will grow like a plant. Keats becomes the spokesman of romanticism when he writes: "If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all". This very idea is ably expressed by the poet in *Timon of Athens*:

A thing [Poetry] slipp'd idly from me.
Our poetry is as a gum, which oozes
From whence 'tis nourish'd. The fire i' the flint
Shows not till it be struck; Our gentle flame
Provokes itself and, like the current, flies
Each bound it chafes.

Here the poet believes that poetry cannot be a laborious art. No stimulus from outside, however strong, can grow poetry. Who knows if Shelley ever read this passage? He seems to echo Shakespeare as he writes in the *Defence of Poetry*, "Poetry is not like reasoning, a thing which can be asserted according to determination of the will. A man

cannot say, 'I will compose a poem'. The power rises from within like the colour of the flower".

In *Love's Labour's Lost* the princess of France and the ladies find that their lovers, disguised as Muscovites are coming to woo them. To outwit them, they also mask, and each lover woos the wrong girl. The scene yields riotous amusement. The princess says:

That sport best pleases that doth least know how ;
Where zeal strives to content, and the contents
Dies in the zeal of that which it presents.
Their form confounded makes most form in mirth,
When great things labouring perish in their birth.

There is no reference to poetry. And yet the conclusion is irresistible that Shakespeare refers here to art in general. The work of art is spoiled whenever there is the striving after effect. The artist, be he a poet or a painter, must have no external stimulus. The unrehearsed efforts of an actor have the freshness of the April morning.

Shakespeare has always made a valiant defence of poetry. Death is strong ; poetry is stronger. Shakespeare knows that his patron with all his beauty will die, Time devours all. Shakespeare, however, is confident that Time cannot "curve . . . with thy hours my love's fair brow", "nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen". It is poetry that perpetuates everything ephemeral. Shakespeare can throw a challenge to the all-devouring Time:—

Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite they wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.

Shelley writes about Keats : "He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he". Shakespeare's patron also will live through ages only because Shakespeare has immortalised him in his verse.

The storied urn or animated bust cannot bring the dead back to life. The monuments and the epitaphs, written in a lapidary style are un-availing in the face of death. Shakespeare knows that poetry will outlive "gilded monuments".

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme ;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
Shakespeare upholds the greatness of poetry :
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

Again, in another sonnet Shakespeare clinches the issue.

You still shall live—such virtue hath my pen—

Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

Proteus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* helps Thurio in his wooing of Silvia and advises him to court her ~~with verse~~. Silvia's father wel-

comes this match and exclaims :

"Much, is the force of heaven-bred poesy".

In reply, Proteus rhapsadises over the strength of Poetry.

Orpheus' lute was strung with poets' sinews,

Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones,

Make tigers tame, and huge leviathans

Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands.

It compels our belief that the captive Greeks won their freedom by reciting the immortal passages of Euripides.

In *Love's Labour's Lost* Berowne and his friends court their ladies in verse and are confident of their success.

"O then his lines would ravish savage ears

And plant in tyrants mild humility.

Armado asks Costard to deliver a love-letter to Jaquenetta, a country wench. Berowne also meets Costard and entrusts him with a love-letter and a sonnet to Rosaline. Costard gets the letters mixed up. Arnodo's pompous and highly rhetorical letter reaches Rosaline, and Berowne's note is delivered to Jaquenetta. The poor girl does not understand the poetical effusion of Berowne. She goes to Holofernes, the pedant, who claims to be a scholar without being one. He occasionally writes verse too and is extremely proud of it. He casually describes his own poetic gift :—

This is a gift that I have, simple, simple ; a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, resolutions. These are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of pia mater, and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am thankful for it.

Shakespeare is laughing at the pedantry and orotundities of Holofernes. His speech is an inextricable tissue of incomprehensibility. His poem, however, compels Sir Nathaniel's admiration. Jaquenetta asks Holofernes to read Berowne's sonnet, addressed to Rosaline. Holofernes is hardly a poet worth the name. And yet he carps at Berowne's sonnet :—

You find not the apostrophas, and so miss the accent. Let me surmise the canzonet. Here are only numbers ratified, but for the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy *caret* : Ovidius Naso was the man. And why in deed Naso, but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy? the jerks of invention *imitari* is nothing.

Holofernes is a severe critic of Berowne's sonnet. And Shakespeare misses no opportunity of slating the artificial style of contemporary romantic poetry. In fact, Shakespeare parodies the love-sonnets of all the four lovers for their artificial and stilted style. The imageries of the king's sonnet are laboured. Longaville writes a sonnet for his

Maria ; and that is also violently strained. Berowne comments upon it :

“O, rhymes are guards on wanton cupid’s hose”.

And then continues :—

This is the liver-vein, which makes flesh a deity,

A green goose a goddess. Pure, pure idolatry.

Shakespeare’s mouthpiece is Berowne in this attack on Longaville’s extravagant style.

After the ladies have fooled the lovers, Berowne is determined not to woo in rhyme any longer. He abjures “taffeta phrases, silken terms precise”.

Nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper’s song.

Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,

True-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,

Figures pedantical, these summer files

Have blown me full of maggot ostentation.

I do forswear them ; and I here protest,

By this white glove,—how white the hand God knows!

Henceforth my wooing mind shall be expusd

In russet years and honest kersey notes.

When Berowne decides to court a lady in prose, it means that the plain, homespun words are better than a conventional poetical exercise written in an ornate and high-falutin style. With all his admiration for poetry, Shakespeare can have little patience with the stuff, Berowne and his comrades call sonnets. For that is not poetry, whatever else it is.

When Hotspur in *Henry IV* denounces poetry, Shakespeare does not share his sentiments. Hotspur has very little emotional sensibility. Allied to his scorn of emotion in his scorn of poetry. He has many noble qualities. Essentially heroic, he is something of an idealist, and an uncompromising love of honour is the most remarkable trait of his character. Glendower indulges in self-adulation as he says :

I framed to the harp

Many an English ditty lovely well,

And gave the tongue a helpful ornament,

A virtue that was never seen in you.

Hotspur flares up at the insinuation. He considers poetry as an affectation, a useless accomplishment.

Marry,

And I am glad of it with all my heart :

I had rather be a kitten and cry mew

Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers ;

I had rather hear a brazen canstick turn’d,

Or a dry wheel grate on the axle-tree ;

And that would set my teeth nothing on edge,

Nothing so much as mincing poetry :

'Tis like the forced gait of a shuffling nag.

Hotspur may hate poetry, but there is nevertheless an element of unconscious poetry in the passionate intensity which finds an eloquent expression in many of his speeches :

King Henry V like Hotspur is also not susceptible to the charm of the Muses. Henry V is Shakespeare's ideal king. An ideal king need not necessarily be a lover of poetry. Soldiers, used to a rigorous camp-life may not feel drawn to the softness and cadence of verse. Most soldiers have not the delicate responsiveness of Wilfred Owen, or even Othello, for Othello says :

"Rude am I in my speech

And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace".

And yet he is the most poetical of the Shakespearian heroes.

King Henry comes to the French Court to discuss the proposed peace negotiations. The treaty is signed, and one of the provisions of the treaty is that Henry should marry Princess Katherine of France. The pair is left together.

Henry V—I know no ways to mince it in love, but directly to say "I love you"; then if you urge me farther than to say "Do you in faith?" I wear out my suit.... Marry, if you would put me to verses or to dance for your sake, Kate, why you undid me: for the one I have neither words nor measure, and for the other, I have no strength in measure, yet a reasonable measure in strength.... And while thou livest, dear Kate, take a fellow of plain and uncoined constancy; for he perforce must do thee right because he hath not the gift to woo in other places: for these fellows of infinite tongue, that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favours, they do always reason themselves out again. What! a speaker is but a prater; a rhyme is but a ballad.

A blunt soldier that Henry is, he has none of the qualities of a cavalier or an Elizabethan gallant. He cannot write verse. Unlike Hotspur however he is ashamed of his inability. He has no sense of rhythm. His criticism of poetry has not the asperity of that of Hotspur.

Epics have grown out of ballads. Even in a sophisticated age balladry remained a treasured literary possession. In the Elizabethan period, however, ballad had a lot of odium about it. The poets and Dramatists of the age looked upon it as an inferior literary genre. Shakespeare is a romanticist; Ben Jonson a classicist. Yet in rallying ballads they have shown almost equal zeal. Ben Jonson in "Neptune's Triumph" says:—

Say till the abortive and extemporal din

Of balladry were understood a sin,

Minerva cried.

In another poem he speaks disparagingly of the "false baits of worded balladry".

Helena in Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* offers to cure the king. Should she fail, she is willing to stake her life and be "traduced by odious ballads".

Ballads in the middle ages were very precious to the people. In the Elizabethan age they had fallen upon evil days. Ballads were synonymous with lampoons, and were sold and sung in streets by ballad-singers. The practice of flinging mud at an enemy by hiring poetasters became quite popular. Falstaff has decided to commit a small robbery as the rich merchants pass Gad's hill. Poins in the meanwhile removes Falstaff's horse. Falstaff tries to persuade the prince to let him have a horse; and when all persuasion fails, he is worked up to a high pitch of passion:—

Go hang thyself in thine own heir-apparent garteys! If I be ta'en, I'll peach for this. And I have not ballads made on you all and sung to filthy tunes, let a cup of sack be my poison.

But sometimes Shakespeare uses the term "ballad" as a record of valour. Prince John meets the nobles at Yorkshire. Falstaff is supposed to be with him. And he comes very late. In answer to his reproof, Falstaff glibly answers:—

I beseech your grace let it be booked with the rest of this day's deeds, or by the Lord, I will have it in a particular ballad else, with mine own picture on the top on't.

When, however, Cleopatra fears that after Antony's death she will be Octavius Caesar's notable prize, and a fit subject for a scurrilous ballad, she cries out in despair:—

Saucy lictors

Will catch at us like strumpets, and scald rhymers

Ballad us out O'tune.

Here the term "ballad" is distinctly pejorative, and with Shakespeare it is mostly so.

Modern poets have chosen to divorce poetry from music. Rugged and free from metre, poetry today is akin to prose. "Poetry", says Eliot, "must not stray too far from the ordinary everyday language which we use and hear". The cadence and lilt are conspicuous by their absence. The Elizabethans, though called "barbarians" by Dr. Johnson, delighted in the sound of spoken words. In the Middle Ages music was the close preserves of the cloister. The Elizabethans inherited a tradition of music from the Renaissance. The Tudor kings and queens were excellent composers. "Add the undoubted fact", writes E. J. Dent, "that from the beginning music was always considered an attraction, and that as much of it, if not of one kind then another, would be provided as possible; that certain of the actors themselves were evidently capable of playing some instrument when required, and that

most professional musicians were capable of playing two or more different instruments”.

We have not the least doubt that Shakespeare has a thorough acquaintance with music—vocal and instrumental. It is, therefore, natural and inevitable that he likes to have a close relation between music and poetry. He has employed songs in many of his comedies. “Songs in Shakespeare”, says Coleridge, “are introduced as songs only, just as songs are in real life”.

Music and poetry in Shakespeare’s vision are inextricably intertwined. As a matter of fact, sometimes they are even synonymous. In the *Winter’s Tale* we have the following passage:—

“I love a ballad but even too well, if it be doleful matter merrily set down, or a very pleasant thing indeed and sung lamentably”.

Count Orsino in *Twelfth Night* says:—

If music be the food of love, play on ;
Give me excess of it, that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.

In *Antony and Cleopatra* we have a similar passage:—

Give me some music ; music, moody food
Of us that trade in love.

Again, in *Romeo and Juliet* it is said:

Music with her silver sound
With speedy help doth lend redress.

In the *Passionate Pilgrim* the poet says:

If music and sweet poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother.

Shakespeare has no faith in a person who does not love music. In the *Merchant of Venice* his views are rather strong.

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov’d with concord of sweet sounds.
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils ;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night.
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.

Music in the Shakespearian plays is not the prerogative of only the lovable people. Cloten in *Cymbeline* is a fool, who becomes wicked at the end, And yet he offers one of the loveliest songs—“Hark! hark! the lark at heaven’s gate sings”. He believes in the close relation between music and poetry.

“A wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich words to it”.

Caliban, who is hardly human is extremely sensitive to music. Not at all sensitive to poetry, Hotspur nevertheless asks his wife to sing. Mortimer who is an Englishman does not understand the language of his Welsh wife, Yet to him

Thy tongue
Makes Welsh as sweet as ditties highly penn'd,
Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bower,
With ravishing division to her lute.

Shakespeare has accepted the "mingled Yarn" of life. Nothing human is alien to him. He does not believe in a philosophy that is recoil from life. Philosophy encourages a sort of indifference to the pleasures of life the cakes and ales. In a debate between philosophy and music, Shakespeare always advocates the latter. Lucentio in *The Taming of the Shrew* has so long lived in a world of philosophy.

For the time I study
Virtue, and that part of philosophy
Will I apply that treats of happiness
By virtue specially to be achieved.

In reply his servant, Tranio who lives in gusto says:—

I am in all affected as yourself,
Glad that you thus continue your resolve
To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy.
Only, good master, while we do admire
This virtue, and this moral discipline,
Let's be no stoics, nor no stocks, I pray,
Or so devote to Aristotle's checks,
As Ovid be an outcast quite abjured.
Balk logic with acquaintance that you have;
And practise rhetoric in your common talk;
Music and poesy use, to quicken you;
The mathematics, and the metaphysics,
Fall to them, as you find your stomach serves you.
No profit grows, where is no pleasure ta'en.

Tranio upholds the dignity of music and poetry. He has, however, made a mis-statement about Aristotle, who is in fact, a doughty champion of both music and poetry. His *Poetics* is a vindication of poetry. And in *Politics* he has spoken eloquently about the cathartic melodies having a very important social function to discharge. People, who are very much 'enthusiatics' in the platonic sense of the term can be cured of 'enthusiasm', and restored to calm and serenity, should they but listen to music. Those who are easily prone to pity and fear can also have catharsis or pleasurable relief from music. But that is a different story. Lucentio says later:—

Then give me leave to read philosophy,
And while I pause, serve in your harmony.

The poetry of the earth is never dead. Gray in "The progress of Poesy" has traced the evolution of poetry from the dim past. The Muse of poetry approached Shakespeare:

Far from the sun and summer gale,
 In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,
 What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
 To him the mighty mother did unveil
 Her awful face: the dauntless child
 Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smiled.
 This pencil take (she said), whose colours clear
 Richly paint the vernal year:
 Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
 This can unlock the gates of joy ;
 Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
 Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.

Shakespeare has "unlocked the gates of joy" and "oped the sacred source of sympathetic tears". Empires have crumbled down, marble and gilded monuments of princes and potentates have been reduced to dust. But Shakespeare's poetry, to quote Morley's picturesque phrase, has been walking for years in the corridor of time. Like a massive rock it has stood four-square against mortality. And yet Shakespeare believes in glorious future of poetry. He appreciates the rich poetic heritage that has come down to the Elizabethan age and visualises nobler poetry in the days to come. As if like D. G. Rossetti he is inclined to say:

And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
 Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

Shakespeare believes in progress in the realms of gold. In a sonnet he says that he may be "outstripped by every pen", "with the bettering of the time". He is confident that better days are ahead, when poets will write in a more happy and congenial atmosphere, and outshine even Shakespeare.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THOMAS DEKKER

TIRTHANKAR BOSE

THE man who writes for money is not easily granted the right of having something serious to say. He is presumably so busy keeping the wolf from his door that he has no time for anything but the wolf. As a Dekker enthusiast I am resigned to lifted eyebrows at the mention of Dekker's principles or his vision or his art. He was certainly one of the hardest pressed of the Jacobean literary proletariat, yet to argue that because the man wrote for his bread he was incapable of being concerned with his salvation, is intolerably cruel. Dekker was no doubt more engaged in holding his audience than in developing and establishing a moral standard, let alone a philosophy. Nevertheless, the dramatist in whom Lamb and Swinburne discovered Shakespeare's twin in comic genius, must have adhered to some kind of a value-system, though it might not have been elaborately worked out. Some of his formulations are undoubtedly fruits of conformist habits, and we may see in *Patent Grissil*, *Old Fortunatus*, the *Honest Whore* or even in *The Shoemakers' Holiday*—to pick the best of Dekker's work—nothing but a standardised morality. Yet it remains true that Dekker shares this morality with his fellow-men in complete sincerity.

But sincerity alone cannot make art viable. Principles are significant only when they have survived doubts, and since in the plays that I have mentioned above, nobody asks 'What is Good?' one may pertinently question Dekker's stature as a thinking man. I do not intend to make an intellectual out of Dekker (heaven forbid!) but I do claim that questions did arise in his mind. What is more, these questions go beyond the concept of righteousness to the problems of temptation and sin. Dekker asks, conventionally enough, Why should we choose Good, not Evil; but he also asks, Why should we have to choose at all? I propose to show these aspects of his thought with reference to a little known play, *If This Be Not a Good Play, the Devil Is In It*, written about 1612.

The subject of this play is the triumph of Virtue over Evil. Conventional as the subject is, there are some features of its handling that deserve attention. Elsewhere, most notably in *Old Fortunatus*, Dekker has a similar subject, but there he starts with a frame-

story of a contention between Virtue and Vice. In the ensuing trial of strength men and women are simply used as pawns and the vastly important human question of deliberately choosing between Virtue and Vice does not arise. It is altogether a much more primitive sort of a play. If we take other plays of this nature, such as the *Whore of Babylon* or the *Wonder of a Kingdom*, there also we find that people are good because they were born that way, not by conviction. But in *If This Be Not* for once we have men facing an open question.

The play opens with Pluto waging war upon the well-regulated state of Naples, with careful plots against persons of such social importance that their lapses may throw the entire community into disarray. The first on the list is the King of Naples, a young man setting out on avowed course of mercy (I. ii. 53).¹, justice (I. ii. 88-9), compassion (I. ii. 105), political prudence (I. ii. 117-9) and encouragement of learning and piety (I. ii. 143-51). He has two virtuous uncles to help him but he also has a crew of courtiers waiting to corrupt him. When Rufman, a devil in disguise, arrives the King readily begins to violate his principles.

The second emissary of Pluto flies to the holiest priory in Naples. This devil, Shacklesoule, succeeds speedily in turning the priests to pleasures of the world and except the Subprior they all go the rest of the primrose path with alacrity. The third devil Lurchall, sent to undermine the city's economy, to cause "politic bank-ruptism" (I. i. 119) finds that he has little to do, for the merchant Barterville is by all standards "A Master, who more villainy has by heart" (II. ii. 12) than any mere devil. His villainy however, cannot be successful in a well-governed state, but in the present Naples of a wayward King it assumes vast social importance. We find that we come back to the King and his social responsibilities as we go through this survey of destruction. The Subprior and men wronged by Barterville come to the King but they are turned away with mockery. When however he spurns his betrothed, Ermynhilda, he completes the victory of sin and sets in motion the forces that must reestablish order. His uncles who are his real friends, leave him, the Subprior retires and Ermynhilda's father the Duke of Calabria attacks Naples. The state, helpless in avarice, sloth and cowardice, is overcome easily and the King recognises his guilt. He is led close to suicide by the treacherous Rufman but is saved by the Subprior who reunites him with Ermynhilda, thus appeasing her father the Duke. The union of the King and Ermynhilda is a symbolic event as it marks the true beginning of the noble life originally promised. All the sinners except the King die because evil had been intrinsic to them while the King had merely strayed from virtue through the inexperience of youth. The play ends with the devils making merry in hell with the souls they have captured. This

takes us back to the theme of the opening scene and these two together are used as frame to present a picture of human life surrounded by evil.

This recognition of the nearness of evil was to the average seventeenth-century man something more than a metaphysical concept, for he took it in a matter of fact way as a part of reality.² At the same time, the possibility that evil could be resisted by simply performing good actions and not necessarily by renouncing the world, was also contained in the humanist tradition of the Renaissance. If Dekker has a philosophy this is its basis. In *If This Be Not*, for instance, it is the King, the man most concerned with material good, upon whom depends the cohesion of the community, not the Subprior to whom virtue is a categorical imperative not to be interpreted in terms of practical benefit, a man who has renounced the world (I.iii.106) and looks not to prosper (III.ii.128).

It follows that for Dekker virtue may operate on two separate levels, one material and social, the other spiritual and personal. The first he understands perfectly. All that this kind of virtue requires is that you should work to make others happy and they will reward you in turn with happiness. Happiness and profit are correlatives of virtue as seen in the social context. But the other kind of virtue, spiritual and personal, which is symbolized by the Subprior, is vague because it is not defined by objective circumstances. The question implicit in the Subprior's life is, unless we seek material felicity why should we be virtuous? Presumably because God has willed us to be so. This at once brings Dekker to the brink of a very dangerous question. At V.iv.29 Ravillac asks,

Why is the devil,

(If man be born good) suffered to make him evil?

This question voices not simply an inability to comprehend God's will but calls into doubt His justice. Perhaps it also implies that human 'good' and divine 'good' are not synonymous. We may recall Faustus' formulation of the case :

The reward of sin is death : that's hard.

* * *

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,
and there is no truth in us.

Why, then, belike we must sin, and so consequently die :

Ay, we must die an everlasting death.

What doctrine call you this, Che sera, sera,—

(*Doctor Faustus*, ed. Osborne, i.40-5)

Dekker does not have the intellectual clarity to thus challenge man's predetermined damnation. He would nevertheless like to know, as Milton's Samson does, why man is deserted by God. In *Old Fortunatus*

the blameless Ampedo, who successfully escapes the snares of Vice, is punished as remorselessly as his unscrupulous brother Andelocia. Is *this* justice? Since God is supposed to love man we may expect Him to protect man from evil. Why does he not do so? Why is the Subprior driven to lament,

Alacke I see

This world's a Cittie built by the most Hie.

But kept by man, (GODS) greatest enemie.

(If This Be Not, III.iii.134-6).

Has God washed His hands of man now that He has given man the ability to choose between good and evil? But why should we have to choose at all, why does He suffer evil to exist at all? Unless one considers the Creation to be a gigantic game one cannot understand why parts of it should be permitted by God to fall to Satan. If it is seen as a game then God cannot be Good to so play with our lives.

Though these are improper thoughts and contrary to the basic Christian tenets of faith and acceptance, yet significantly enough, Dekker does not quash them with 'Wilt thou question God's will?' Instead he does what any practical philosopher would do. He leaves these metaphysics alone to fall back upon the solution: Do unto others as you will have them do unto you. Questions that cannot be answered in terms of such objective ethics,³ are swamped in the merry-making of the devils, which drives home the inevitable association between sin and retribution. The audience may indeed be advised now to accept with the King a practical morality.

A very strange thing has happened here. Dekker has had doubts about the validity of abstract moral qualities and the meaning of virtue only to realise with the greater clarity than ever the futility of such enquiries. Consequently he has consummated an equation between morality and social good. The modest philosophy of virtue that he has gained is therefore not the outcome of a conformist acceptance of contemporary values but a matter of intellectually processed conviction. It is good to know that 'gentle Dekker' could also ask questions. But who cares that he did not remain a doubting Thomas?

REFERENCES

1. All references are to Fredson Bowers ed. *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, Cambridge, 1953-61, vol. iii.

2. This has been very fully examined by Lecky in *The Rise of Rationalism in Europe*.

3. Ravillac is not the only one who asks uncomfortable questions. The Prodigal asks,

Why for a few sinnes that are long hence past,

Must I feel torments that shall euer last?

(If This Be Not, V. iv. 25-6.)

MIDDLETON'S COMIC ART IN *A TRICK TO CATCH THE OLD ONE*

RUBY CHATTERJI

A Trick to Catch the Old One stands out among Middleton's comedies as one in which he has found a mode of comic expression particularly suited to his genius. A balance is achieved between the earlier social comedies (*The Phoenix*, *Your Five Gallants*, *Michaelmas Term*) with their satiric intent and periodic outbursts of moral indignation, and the light-hearted humorous tone (at least in the main plot) of *A Mad World, My Masters*. The theme of cupidity, serious in itself, is yet comically handled. Moral values are inferred by insinuation and implication, not by deliberate exposition. Delicate irony and sharpened ridicule act as vehicles of criticism instead of heavy didacticism or overdone sentiment (unlike in Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*).

The vice of covetousness had been socially recognized as one of the deadliest of sins right from medieval times, and accordingly meted with the severity of treatment that is witnessed by *The Pardoner's Tale* or *The Castle of Perseverance*. Their obvious Jacobean counterparts are Jonson's *Volpone* and *Alchemist*. But Middleton too, sufficiently aware of the moral and social values of his time, takes up the theme in his own ironic manner in *Michaelmas Term*, and again in *A Trick to Catch the Old One*. Far from being a repetition, however, the latter play reveals the measure of the difference in his handling of the same theme. While a schematic splitting between the vices of covetousness and lust occurs in *Michaelmas Term*, and between folly and vice in *A Mad World, My Masters*, in the respective main plots and sub-plots of these plays, in *A Trick to Catch the Old One* the single theme of cupidity is given a graded treatment. Regarded as more of a folly in *Lucre and Hoard*, it is represented as a vice in the creditors and particularly in *Dampit* and *Gulf*, with increasing denunciatory tone. The minor themes of prodigality and lechery are lightly dismissed at the start as follies of youth (compare the morality play tradition of allotting specific vices to youth and age), though they reappear (at least by mention) as part of the enormities of that epitome of vice, *Dampit*. Since, however, these latter failings are never dramatically depicted in the body of the play, but merely narrated or alluded to

as background material, the tonal gradation from folly to vice is, in effect, more relevant than a thematic splitting.

The prevailing mood is one of light-hearted comedy. This is cleverly maintained by the use of a simple but archetypal comic device: the playing off of two powerful villains against each other to the ultimate benefit of the weaker hero. By doubling the same type of villain figure, the avaricious usurer, and pitting them one against the other in a spirit of fierce competition, comic capital is made out of their ludicrous behaviour, since their mutual rivalry proves as much of a folly to them in the end, as their primary covetousness from which it had originated. The three Dampit scenes do not properly constitute a sub-plot. Closer in style and tone to Middleton's non-dramatic satire of *The Black Book*, their presence in the play may be explained but hardly justified. Schematic unification is sought by their touching the same themes, in a different key, but structurally, they are quite peripheral to the plot, occupying a negligible, even superfluous, place in the drama. The only links are that Witgood meets Dampit on the street, Hoard invites him to his wedding, and the same group of background characters are made to visit him.

As in other Middleton comedies the scenic background is recognizably Jacobean London with touches of local colour here and there, but circumstantial detail is not elaborated for its own sake as it is in his social comedies (like *Michaelmas Term* and *Your Five Gallants*). What is interesting to observe in this play is how Middleton successfully brings the public and private life of his characters together, representing a social vice in family terms, without discarding its professional aspect. Lucre is Witgood's uncle, so his legal action of seizing the forfeiture on the mortgage is unnatural with regard to family ties. The professional and public rivalry of Lucre and Hoard is also given richness and piquancy by being transferred to the domestic plane. Hoard makes it abundantly clear that he seeks the widow both for his personal joy and professional revenge, while Lucre, at first motivated by professional greed, ultimately takes up his nephew's cause as upholding the family prestige. The money-lenders represent another professional aspect of the scene, while Joyce, Freedom and Moneylove are purely domestic figures. Even Dampit is depicted in his professional capacity as a trampler of the law as also in his intense personal loathsomeness. Covetousness is then clearly seen in the context of both private and public relations, with interconnections between the two spheres. As early as *The Phoenix*, Middleton had attempted to depict the professional and private life of his characters (as in *Falso*), but there the two halves do not cohere. In *Michaelmas Term*, Quomodo's professional machinations are partly punished by his private frustration of dis-

covering a faithless family. Thus while the setting in Middleton's comedies is increasingly shifting from the social to the domestic plane (witness *A Mad World, My Masters*) *A Trick to Catch the Old One* strikes the balance, and forges a unity between the two by making the same vice penetrate both fields.

Within the conventional Jacobean framework depicting the covetous overreacher or craft recoiling on itself, Middleton adroitly introduces various features¹ of classical comedy bringing the play close in tone, spirit and plan to his own *A Mad World, My Masters*. Witgood is a counterpart of Follywit, a young man facing financial ruin who must fall back upon his wits to help himself. The conflict here is with his old avaricious uncle, a more formidable adversary than the frolicsome grandfather of *A Mad World, My Masters*. Yet the struggle is emphatically a psychological battle of wits, moral sentiment being carefully played down. Whatever condemnation there exists is to be found within the ironic unfolding of the plot itself and inseparable from it, not in isolated set passages of moralizing. Intrigue and counter-intrigue form the basis of the plot, as in all other Middleton's comedies, the dramatic sympathy here being entirely with the hero who is also the prime mover of the intrigue. Witgood and the Courtesan act as agents of retribution on the covetous Lucre and Hoard respectively, who not only fully deserve their fate but also contribute towards it, if unintentionally and unconsciously, yet with all the shrewdness and labour they are capable of. This is the supreme irony of the situation.

The strength and beauty of the play lie in its complete integration of plot and character. Banking on the covetous instincts of his uncle Witgood launches the primary action, which in its turn is complicated by the complementary psychology of rivalry, thus setting in motion a whole chain of reactions that generate their own momentum. The individual situations, too, are a direct result of the interaction of characters. But instead of separate sets of wit-combat (as in *A Mad World, My Masters*), all characters are swept up within one complex and intricate action in which each is trying to fend for himself. This makes for a more organic unity.

The play opens with a crisis action, as in classical comedy. I, i,² is a good exposition of characters, situation and comic tone. Witgood surveys the result of his prodigality aggravated by his uncle's avarice. There is self-castigation but also comic fortitude. The ludicrous comparison of his uncle's conscience to a dangerous sea-voyage, while striking the right comic tone, also suggests what to expect by way of characteristic response. The courtesan shares in his past disgrace, as she is to be his willing partner in the future intrigue, which she comically refers to as their 'child'. 'Arm your wits' is the battle-cry

and Witgood is set "to catch that old fox mine uncle" in the sportive spirit of a hunt. Witgood relies on the 'usurer's love' of his old uncle, summing up the position in a neat antithesis: "if his nephew be poor indeed, why, he lets God alone with him; but if he be once rich, then he'll be the first man that helps him" (I. i, 95-97). Later, Witgood's ability to impose on the mad Host (I. ii) by his rich-widow story ensures the soundness of his plot and anticipates his success with his uncle, apart from enlisting an active and enthusiastic helper.

I, iii, the public quarrel between Lucre and Hoard is highly comic. The comedy lies in the symmetrical balancing of the belligerent adversaries: equal in avarice as in unscrupulousness, both vent a righteous indignation at each other, hypocritically appealing to such idealistic ethical values as honesty and conscience. The ironic discrepancy between the highly moralistic tone of the quarrel and the dubious nature of its cause—fetching over a young heir—is typical of Middleton. This is also reflected in the imagery: "... like a cunning usurer, to come in the evening of the bargain, and glean all my hopes in a minute? to enter as it were, at the back door of the purchase? for thou ne'er camest the right way by it" (I. iii, 21-24). Notice the images ('bargain', 'glean', 'purchase') drawn from honest occupations, and the ethical tone ('right way'), totally inappropriate in its context, and highly comic, coming from Hoard, himself also a usurer. The spiteful animosity of the rivals reaches its comic climax in the names of poisonous reptiles by which they slander each other, tit-for-tat.

Hoa.	Toad !
Luc.	Aspic !
Hoa.	Serpent !
Luc.	Viper !

(I, iv, 55-58)

In practice each comically mirrors the other. The quarrel also advances the plot by resulting in Hoard's determined resolution to pursue revenge with "that flame of hate, that spirit of malice, unrepressed wrath" (43-44). Such excess of zeal demands to be quenched, as it inevitably is, in the end. While providing conventional stage farce, the Freedom and Moneylove episode suggests the motif of rivalry in love (paralleling the rivalry in covetousness) soon to become a major concomitant in the play's pattern.

II, i, Lucre is found to have become rather sensitive to Hoard's insult regarding his nephew, and is attempting some self justification. Dramatically, an additional motive is suggested for his favourable reactions to the Host's information. The comedy of this scene relies on different levels of irony: the uncle is gulled into trusting the Host's "good blunt honesty", when the whole move has been cleverly pre-

planned; the Host, acting out his part to the best of his own satisfaction, is quite unaware that he himself is a pawn in the game and a like dupe. Lucre responds precisely as Witgood would have him, and is even prepared to go one step further finding his nephew rather evasive. The exact psychological process is charted out step by step. At this stage in the plot Lucre is ready to part with a piece of money only, but certainly not the mortgage, and even reveals a covetous impulse to acquire the widow's lands. But a stronger emotional factor supervenes: "the sudden astonishing of old Hoard... Ha, ha! twill do me more secret joy than my last purchase, more precious comfort than all these widows revenues" (207-214). In this conciliatory mood he enlarges his gift to his nephew, declaring: "there's nothing like an uncle's house to strike the stroke in" (notice the comic alliteration and double-entendre) and even presents the supposed widow with a cup. In fact the fox has been neatly trapped, and Witgood's original aim (I, i, 83-97) is already fulfilled.

But the play's aim is not. The second round of the game is anticipated by Freedom's transferring his affections from Joyce to the 'widow'. The 'widow' is going to be 'mightily followed'. Moneylove also joins the widow-hunt, once again deserting Joyce, (in seeking to compete with Witgood his real rivals only clear the way for his true love). The pattern is completed by Hoard himself being inspired to seize on what appears to him an excellent opportunity for revenge. "Happy revenge, I hug thee! I have not only the means laid before me, extremely to cross my adversary, and confound the last hopes of his nephew, but thereby to enrich my state, augment my revenues, and build mine own fortunes greater" (II, ii, 44-48).

The Creditors episode (III, 1) thematically underlines the cupidity of society in general, and of creditors as a class in particular. A replica of the legacy-hunters in *Volpone*, they repeat the professional rivalry of Lucre and Hoard. They share the same psychology on which Witgood had relied to catch his uncle. Structurally, by almost asking to be gulled (at this point), they instil so great a self-confidence in Witgood that he can now aspire to recover his mortgage.

Hoard's proposal to the Courtesan is a turn of situation that even Witgood had not foreseen; it has developed out of the logical course of the events themselves. But he is clever enough to recognize its potentialities, and once again, in classical comedy style, calls upon his wits to assist him further. "I reach at farther happiness: first, I am sure it can be no harm to thee, and there may happen goodness to me by it: prosecute it well; let's send up for our wits, now we require their best and most pregnant assistance." (III, i, 123-126).

The 'widow's' acceptance of Hoard and renunciation of Witgood involves fine play-acting, and she can give this twin move all the

air of spontaneity in spite of its being entirely pre-determined. Hoard's plan of eloping with her to Cole-Harbour is not only to her advantage but also comes in very handy for Witgood, who can now spring it on his uncle as a vile plot. It has the desired effect of maddening Lucre who is consequently prepared to go further than he had done so far: "I'll spend my wealth on this despiteful plot / Ere he shall cross me and my nephew thus." (III, iii, 107-108) In his encounter with the 'widow' in Cole Harbour (IV, i) he makes no attempt to conceal his feelings, and the 'widow' cleverly works on him to recover Witgood's mortgage. At one time words were all he was prepared to give his nephew. But as the 'widow' wisely declares: "If words were lands, your nephew would be rich", the truth of which Lucre can no longer deny, and is forced to part with something more substantial. The irony lies in the fact that he does not realize she is already 'made sure' to Hoard, which is brought to a comic point in her equivocal oath: "I will be as clear then as I am now." Later, Lucre's reluctance to finally part with the mortgage, and the play on 'trust', makes good comic business.

Witgood's fortunes reaching their zenith, he is so overjoyed that he can even pity his enemies for laughing at each other:

"He has no conscience, faith, would laugh at them:

They laugh at one another ;

Who then can be so cruel? troth, not I ;

I rather pity now, then ought envy?" (IV, ii, 85-88)

Little realizing the vulnerability of his own position. In the comic spirit of the play his excess of confidence needs to be corrected too. The second appearance of the Creditors (IV, iii) serves this purpose, as it also introduces a suspense element in the plot. Witgood has to crave yet more aid from his wits, and echoing Follywit, promises to employ them better hereafter. Thematically, the thoroughgoing mercenariness of the creditors demonstrates the satiric assumptions about cupidity on which the play is based.

IV, i, is rich in Middleton's typical irony. Hoard counts his blessings in possessing what he considers a paragon of a wife: "she's rich, she's young, she's fair, she's wise: when I wake I think of her lands—that revives me; when I go to bed, I dream of her beauty." But the audience knows the lands to be non-existent and the beauty to be cankered. Then, in the spirit of Quomodo, he also indulges in day-dreams of a journey into the country, in as graphic terms. He has the additional motive of flaunting his good fortune before his enemy, therefore he is prepared to proceed further. Translating his thoughts into action, he employs a whole retinue of people, including falconer and huntsman, for this sole purpose. Middleton has here pursued the comic situation as far as it will go. Only the widow's clever evasion,

of keeping her wedding-dinner in the country, keeps up the hoax till the end.

The pre-contract episode including the 'clean', 'handsome' conveying away of the letter is good stage comedy (repeated by Middleton in *The Roaring Girl*). It is used as one more instance of the witty solution of a dramatic problem: the paying off of Witgood's creditors. It also leads to further comic action when Hoard is found to be more anxious to clear Witgood's debts than Witgood himself. While both creditors and Hoard feel satisfied over a good bargain the advantage is actually Witgood's. The legal document of release, as complete a fake as the pre-contract, is ironically made to include an impressive catalogue of the 'widow's' "moveable or immoveable" possessions (contrast, in *The Phoenix*, Castiza's real virtues in her deed of sale). The imposture is complete. The play only awaits the anti-climatic discovery, by the over-confident Hoard and incredulous Lucre alike, that they have both been thoroughly duped. As in *A Mad World, My Masters*, the wedding-feast brings this about. Hoard must learn his lesson:

"Curs'd be all malice! black are the fruits of spite,

And poison first their owners." (V, ii, 55-56)

and, presumably, Lucre also. The formal recantation of past folly, by both the Courtesan and Witgood, follows up an idea present in the opening scene. It makes a happy ending by reconciliation all round, and lightly touches the curiosity of the audience by a glimpse into the ways of rakes and harlots, subjects Middleton had already treated at greater length in his earlier plays.

The plot, though containing in a multiplicity of incidents, has a classical neatness of design, each turn and twist in its progress being clearly executed. Its superiority over *A Mad World, My Masters* or *Michaelmas Term* lies in that the incidents are not only related to the intriguer, but appear to produce one another by a logical inevitability. The intriguer having once set the ball rolling simply takes advantage of its turns. The emphasis remains on the sequence of events rather than on architectural balancing (unlike in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*). Spontaneity is subservient to predictability, surprise to expectancy. If it lacks the fine absurdity of the play-within-play scene of *A Mad World, My Masters*, the compensation lies in the neat ironic interlocking of episodes within the close continuity of its structure.

In the fast-moving action of Middleton's comedies excitement is often whipped up by an artificially imposed sense of the urgency of time. This happens in *Michaelmas Term*, where Easy feels obliged to borrow money before the next evening, and is undone because of the apparent delay to repay it. Ironically, the juggling with time is part of the cony-catching. *A Trick to Catch the Old One* utilizes the time

factor by ironically playing off the haste with which Lucre and Hoard wish to rush the 'widow' into marriage, against the absence of any real need for hurry in the matter.

The characters though adhering to conventional types are yet sufficiently individually realized by being placed firmly among family members and social relations, as also by being rooted to a past life out of which the events of the play evolve.

Witgood, the hero, is close to Follywit (of *A Mad World, My Masters*) in his capacity as a clever intriguer. But as the difference in names signify, wit is no longer to be regarded as a folly, in him, but as an instrument capable of being put to good use. Follywit's humour vents itself in 'mad pranks' while Witgood's plan serves his necessity. Follywit is punished, however lightly, by being married to a courtesan. Witgood is on no counts a loser: gaining money, land, wife, and even disposing of his courtesan to his moral satisfaction. His wit and resourcefulness are given complete comic sanction. His moral immunity is further strengthened by making him a reformed rake who realizes his past evils and rejects them, not only at the opening of the play, but also at various points in the action, till the final renunciation at the end.

His co-partner in intrigue, the Courtesan, coming at the long end of Middleton tradition, is most sympathetically drawn. A perfect artist in dissembling when she chooses, she is yet sincere and loyal to Witgood with almost marital fidelity. She, like him, is conscious of having been a prodigal, with her own jewel: virginity. Clever enough to turn his own words of reproach on him, she nevertheless contrives to obtain both the mortgage and clearance of his debts. In return, Witgood also shows his responsibilities by her. But for the ironic necessities of the plot, particularly the punishment of Hoard, she need not have been a courtesan at all (compare Lady Allworth in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*). For her Hoard is a rich prize, for him she is a bad bargain, but even this is somewhat mitigated by her final reform. Hoard has indeed married a wise wife: she not only makes him promise love for her person, but also effectively restrains him from publishing her shame and his own scandal. One may also say with Witgood in her defence that (unlike the courtesan in *A Mad World, My Masters*) she is not 'common'.

Lucre and Hoard, the pair of unconscionable extortioners, are identical in covetousness, with a past resembling Quomodo's (Michaelmas Term) "in the fetching of a young heir". But unlike Quomodo's their avarice is subordinated to the secondary trait born out of it, their mutual hatred, which is fantastically exaggerated for the play's comic purpose. Lucre is ultimately made to sacrifice his covetousness to his rivalry, though not without a pang, and Hoard, who is even more

fanatical in his clamour for revenge, undertakes the widow-hunt as much to cross his adversary as to build up his own fortunes. Acquisitive instinct is immediately followed by personal spleen in his self-congratulatory soliloquy (IV, iv).

Covetousness leading to gross moral depravity is depicted in the Creditors who have no redeeming features whatsoever. Satiric bitterness and contempt is reserved for them. Fawning and cringing upon Witgood and pressing their gifts on him in expectation of more gain, they are quick to change front and gnash their teeth, demanding 'money or carcass', when they feel deluded of their hopes. Readily resorting to blatant lies to wheedle out their money, they unashamedly confess their contemptible tricks once they have gained their end. Their crass commercialism is further exemplified by their finally accepting the drastically reduced sum that Hoard doles out to them.

Minor characters—like the pair of fools, Freedom and Moneylove, or the linking figures like Onesiphorus Hoard, Limber and Kix, even Joyce and Lucre's wife—all hover in the background with the purpose of assisting the plot and lending realism to the play. The mad Host is however allowed more of a personal character, both as an accomplice and a dupe of Witgood.

The three Dampit scenes (I, iv ; III, iv ; IV, v) stand out from the rest of the play as a curiosity. Thematically, they represent the bestial results of a life-time of sin : "the most notorious, usuring, blasphemous, atheistical, brothel-vomiting, rascal" (I, iv, 13-14)—as Dampit is characterised to be. In their mutual antagonism, Dampit and his 'fellow-caterpillar', Gulf, bear the same relationship to each other as Lucre and Hoard : "This is excellent, thief rails upon thief!" (IV, v, 168). Dampit is punished by his utter physical decrepitude, which significantly contrasts with his vicious verbal energy and vile imagination. His 'trampling' feet, of which he had once boasted, are now reduced to such abominable stink that he himself cannot bear it. The situation is summed up chorically : "here may a usurer behold his end : what profits it to be a slave in this world and a devil i' the next." The final scene seems to be a symbolic representation of damnation within the body of the play³: a hellmouth yawning on the stage itself and Dampit as the unreclaimed sinner. The comedy of these scenes is the comedy of the grotesque with Dampit as a gargoyle figure. Except at his introduction (I, iv) where his exhibitionism, correctly predicted by Witgood, appears highly comic, Middleton does not succeed in making Dampit a fully comic figure, though he attempts it. Dampit scandalously abuses Audrey for her pains, mocks at Sir Launcelot assuming his back is turned, gives inhuman legal advice, and is only rivalled in his abomination by Gulf, "the dive-dapper of damnation", who is a coward withal. The effect is both distasteful and

strained, evoking more disgust than amusement. The Dampit scenes appear to be completely incongruous in tone, style, and spirit with the rest of the play. It is as though one were suddenly to come across gothic friezes between classical columns.

The stylistic achievement of *A Trick to Catch the Old One* is particularly noticeable for the peculiarity of the Dampit scenes and their contrast with the rest of the play. Dampit speaks in a highly bizarre idiom (resembling Nashe's prose), and with almost maniacal frenzy: "Out, you babliaminy, you unfeathered, cremitoried quean, you cullisance of scabiosity" (IV, v, 52-53). Such linguistic aberration is counter-balanced by the almost logical precision and polished economy of style throughout the rest of the play. The drama progresses through rapid dialogue and fine antithetically balanced speeches, often cleverly using rhetorical questions (as in Witgood's opening soliloquy; the Courtesan's answers; Lucre's soliloquy II, i, 1-13). Comic tone is created occasionally by parody (of the Bible or of scholastic logic), but consistently maintained through the ironic counterpointing of key words and images. The obvious example of 'Dutch widow' has been cited by R. B. Parker,⁴ the subtler use of 'conscience' offers a parallel example: it occurs at least ten times in the play, with various shades or irony, in its immediate contexts, as well as in the network of relationship of its uses. Constantly repeated in connection with Lucre's covetousness, the ludicrous discrepancy of the application is obvious enough. But ironically, Lucre himself uses the word as an ethical standard of reference: "Hast thou the conscience to tell me so without any impeachment of thyself?" (I, iii, 25-26). Witgood also wishes to ease his 'conscience' by seeing the Courtesan well married (by fraud) which is in a sense comic; though he also uses it in the straightforward moral sense, when echoes from other parts of the play may, or may not, be picked up by the audience. This specialized technique of extracting multiple implications from words, primarily with ironic intent, becomes a major stylistic feature of Middleton in the fine artistry of his later plays, like *The Changeling*.

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THE HOUSE OF LIFE : ITS CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

PHULLORA RAY

IN the general debunking of the Victorian celebrities in the years between the two World Wars, Rossetti the poet suffered less than Rossetti the man and the painter. While as a person he underwent rank denigration¹ and as a painter he was dismissed as "a poet with some sense of design",² as a poet he did not suffer anything like the same eclipse. The centenary notices of his poetry in 1928 were generally appreciative, and the larger studies called forth by the event, such as that of R. L. Megroz,³ sought to interpret his poetry from new points of view. The Harvard University Press brought out a centenary edition of *The House of Life*⁴ edited by P. F. Baum. In more recent years Masefield has thought fit to discharge a personal debt to Rossetti by publishing an illuminating commentary on the whole of Rossetti's poetical works,⁵ and more recently still, M. C. Bowra⁶ has devoted a substantial chapter of *The Romantic Imagination* (1950) to a study of *The House of Life* in which he definitely declares Rossetti's place among the English poets to be secure.

The continued interest in *The House of Life* is easily understood. It is Rossetti's most characteristic work. It unfolds the whole panorama of Rossetti's life experience and poetic development. *The House of Life* has been studied variously, as a work of art and as Rossetti's testament of Beauty and Love. There is, however, still scope for an evolutionary study of the development of the poet's mind and art as reflected in the sequence. The basis for such a study was provided by W. M. Rossetti's final edition of the complete works of Rossetti (1911)⁷ in which a definite date was fixed for each and every poem of Rossetti, in supersession of all previous chronology.⁸ The chronological studies attempted so far⁹ have been chiefly directed to a biographical interpretation of the sonnets. It is the object of the present paper to study the sequence as a history of the growth of Rossetti's ideas about life and art.

The pattern which Rossetti imposed on the sonnets was intended to figure out the sequence as a commentary on life. The very names of the two sections of the sequence, *Youth and Change* and *Change and Fate* indicate his intention. They were, however, chosen after much

deliberation, and there was also considerable hesitation over the placing of the individual sonnets, in disregard of their dates of composition. This has proved partially baffling to the critics. Thus though A. C. Benson¹⁰ finds "a certain evolution of experience throughout", he misses the time-sequence, and following Rossetti's pattern, considers together sonnets widely separated in time. A chronological study decidedly makes for a clearer understanding of the sonnets.

Read chronologically the sonnets are seen to fall into three distinct periods: 1847-1867; 1868-71 and 1872-1881. In the first period Rossetti is preoccupied with problems of life and art, love is the all-absorbing interest of the second, while the third is a period of reveries and revaluations.

A large number of the sonnets of the first period deal with problems which confronted Rossetti in his youth. Life to young Rossetti was a serious business. There was temptation to resist (*Retro Me*, *Sathana*, 1847), and a choice to make from among conflicting ideals (*Eat thou and drink*, 1848. *Watch thou and fear*, 1848, and *Think thou and act*, 1848). With eager anxiety he had to search for his vocation, treading bewildered tracks, missing the ideal and then retracing his steps to it (*The Landmark*, 1854). He had to choose between poetry and painting. His dissatisfaction with contemporary art led him to hope for and speculate upon the possibility of a new birth in Art. Would the new birth come in the wake of a religious movement or through a revival of old art? In *St. Luke the Painter*, 1849, Rossetti traces the evolution of art,—how, originating with St. Luke, it lost its pristine simplicity and became soulless and artificial, and ends with a hope that in the contemporary twilight of art "the earlier religious spirit may return"—a simple statement of the Pre-Raphaelite hope of a revival of religious art. The second sonnet, *Not as these*, 1849, shows Rossetti's consciousness of his differences from the painters who paint for mere glory in the frigid atmosphere of "the philistia". The third (*The Husbandman*, 1849) glorifies "the early Pre-Raphael painters, usually called the Primitives and Early Italians"; and calls upon the young painters of the day not to "stand idly by" in the market place but to strive to build a worthy future in the regeneration of art. Its original title, *To the Young Painters of England, in memory of those before Raphael*, leaves no doubt that it was intended to be a manifesto of the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

High idealism, however, is forever crossed with a sense of human frailty, and in *Autumn Idleness*, 1850, and *Known In Vain*, 1855, the young poet-artist is uncertain about the future and is full of self-reproach, "with a sense of faculties untrained and opportunities slighted". *Lost on Both Sides*, 1854, is full of bitter discontent with his own efforts in both poetry and painting. This feeling of frustration

and remorse reaches a fearful climax in *Lost Days*, written in 1862. Remorse in the sonnet is overwhelming in the imagery in which it is draped:

The lost days of my life until today,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of Wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of Hell, a thirst alway?

The solitary love poem of the period is *The Birthbond*, 1854. Rossetti's belief in 'pre-natal existence and Platonism are epitomised in this poem. Love is preordained and the lover knows the beloved as his soul's birth-partner even at first sight. This love is not just accidental, depending on chances of nearness and time. It is deep and old.

Even so, when first I saw you, seemed it, Love,
That among souls allied to mine was yet
One nearer kindred than life hinted of.
O born with me somewhere that men forget,
And though in years of sight and sound unmet,
Known for my soul's birthpartner well enough!

The sonnet is of special importance being virtually the only love sonnet written during the life time of Lizzie Siddal.

On the threshold of the second period (1868-1871) we come across a sonnet of vital importance for the understanding of the love sonnets comprised in it—*The Portrait* (1868). W. M. Rossetti's paraphrase of the sonnet is as follows:

O Love, thou Lord of all benign sovereignty! Vouchsafe that this picture, the picture of my Lady, may glow under my hand to bespeak praise to her name, and may show the perfect whole even of her inner self; so that he who seeks to explore the uttermost of her beauty may know—beyond the light which the sweet glances throw, and beyond the reflux wave of the sweet smile—the very horizon line of her soul.—And see, the portrait is now done. Above the columnar throat the mouth's mould testifies to voice and kiss, the shadowed eyes seem to remember and foresee. Her face is thus made her shrine—by contemplating her face in this picture, people will half worship her beauty and herself. Let all men know that in all future years they that would look on her must come to me—must see her through this my portrait of her; such is thy gift, O Love!

Baum is inclined to see in this sonnet an identity of spirit with *Beata Beatrix*, 1862. Stephens associates it with Alexa Wilding, yet it is probable that this sonnet refers to the portrait of Mrs. Morris

which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, and which was completed by Rossetti in 1868-69. A critic maintains that the lily in question is undoubtedly the presiding spirit of *The House of Life*. The exuberance of love sonnets in the ensuing three years is at any rate closely connected with this sonnet in time.

The cluster of love sonnets written in 1869 unfolds the wakening of a new love, and portrays every possible shade of love. From the birth of love the sonnets move on to its fulfilment in rapturous ecstasy, until feelings of uncertainty and secrecy cut across the happiness. In *Bridal Birth* (1869) the birth of love is celebrated and shown as analogous to the birth of a child. Love is the child of passion, "poignant thirst and exquisite hunger"—

As when desire long darkling, dawns, and first
The mother looks upon the new born child,
Even so my Lady stood at gaze and smiled
When her soul knew at length the love it nursed.

In the octave of *The Love-Moon* the poet wonders whether it is possible to "gaze into the eyes of the New Beloved and not see in them reminders of buried truth". He concludes by expressing the hope that the "New Love" added to the "Buried Love" will reveal a development in him, "like that of the moon waxing from the crescent to the full moon".

Secret Love and *Parted Love* paint the lovers parting in secrecy and in despair. The pangs of parting are further accentuated in the Willow-wood quartet. "Willow-wood is a grove with a well or fountain, sacred to those who have loved and lost and cannot forget". (Baum)

I sat with love on a woodside well,
Leaning across the water, I and he;
Nor ever did he speak nor looked at me,
But touched his lute wherein was audible
The certain secret thing he had to tell:
Only our mirrored eyes met silently
In the low wave; and that sound came to be
The passionate voice I knew, and my tears fell.

The imagery of the well water is revived again in the fourth sonnet of the group, and here Love is not just "Eros" or "Amor" but it is the very spirit of Divinity.

Only I know that I leaned low and drank
A long draught from the water where she sank,
Her breath and all her tears and all her soul:
And as I leaned, I know I felt Love's face
Pressed on my neck with moan of pity and grace,
Till both our heads were in his aureole.

The sonnets of 1870, however, show a complete recovery from this

despondency. Taken seriatim, as they stand in the sequence, they reveal an interesting pattern. Beginning in the mood of supreme surrender, Love becomes a worship. The heyday of love is experienced in *A Day of Love, Love-sweetness, Life in Love*. *Life in Love* clearly marks the rejuvenation of Rossetti through the inspiration of the New Beloved. Life was a barren and dreary waste before the poet's meeting with the New Beloved:

Look on thyself without her, and recall
The waste remembrance and forlorn surmise
That lived but in a dead drawn breath of sighs
Or vanished hours and hours eventual.

Occasional fear of this happiness being thwarted is dispelled by the poet's faith that love that is thwarted in this world will be consummated in Love's heaven. The lovers' souls will meet at last on the "immortal strand".

The glory of Love seems to reach its zenith in *Love Enthroned*, (1871) The supremacy of Love is vindicated over all kindred powers—Truth, Hope, Fame Youth and Life. Love is depicted as a divine being. This insistence on the spiritual nature of passion affects the whole tone and temper of Rossetti's poetry. "Who can read *The House of Life*", says Myers in his essay on *Rossetti and Religion of Beauty*, "and not feel that this poet has known love as love can be, not as an enjoyment only or a triumph, but a worship and a regeneration?"

Nature is interwoven with the moods of the lovers in the subtlest way in *Silent Noon* and most other sonnets of the year. The calm and peaceful love experienced by the lovers is deepened by the tranquil beauty of the landscape around. The last three sonnets of the year, as numbered by Rossetti, *Without Her, Love's Fatality, Love's Last Gift* are clearly indicative of the close of a period. Of *Without Her* Rossetti said, "I cannot tell you (Hall Caine) at what terrible moment it was wrung from me". The infinite pathos inherent in the sonnet scarcely needs any comment. It is wrung from a heart torn by bitter pangs of separation, which has obscured the gold and silver of the flowers and the moonlight—the sunbathed world of the previous sonnets, leaving only the blank grey "there where the pool is blind of the moon's face". Thwarted Love is again seen in *Love's Fatality*. *Love's Last Gift* is practically the epilogue to all the love sonnets of the year. It is tinged with a deep autumnal tone. The sweet blooms of love were offered in Spring and Summer, yet even in Autumn the lover has the laurel leaf to offer to his beloved:—

Only this laurel dreads no winter days:

Take my last gift: thy heart hath sung my praise.

The outburst of Love which signalizes this period is all but at an end after 1871. The changes in Rossetti's general outlook on life in this

second period are also reflected in some of the sonnets. *A Superscription* reverts to the old themes of loss and regret for "what might have been", while *New Born Death* (two sonnets) records a longing for death in keeping with the poet's suicidal mania of these years noted by Bell Scott and others. Some of the sonnets of 1869 also are in the same key. *Vain Virtues* laments unfulfilled promise. Social inequalities and injustices fill the poet with indignation in *Sun's Shame*.

Inexplicably the following year (1872) was totally barren of sonnet-writing. When Rossetti again resumes writing sonnets, his themes are mostly other than love. The period is indeed one of reveries and revaluations. When he thinks of love, it is in retrospect. Love is now a memory, as Spring and Summer are in autumn (*The Soul's Sphere*.) He reviews his past in *The Heart of the Night* and prays to the 'Lord of Work and Peace that though late, his soul may be renewed with dutiful breath. In *The Trees of the Garden* (1875) the poet probes into the mystery of life, sealed to man and known only to "The Earth's self" and primeval forests. The True Woman remains to the end a human and sacred mystery to the poet-painter who was the bondman and slave of the Lady Beauty. (*True Woman*, 3 sonnets) The Introductory sonnets to the two sections are "fragments of an *ars poetica*" which lays down that a poem is "the transfigured life" of its author; the sonnet and the lyric, indeed poetry as poetry, must spring from and bear the impress of the poet's life.

Again, as one goes through the sonnets in the order of their composition one finds Rossetti to have withdrawn from the picturesque world of his youth to a closed world of "twilight shadows and intangible things". The early sonnets abound in picturesque details and the natural imagery in them is highly impressive. The spacious and clear atmosphere of—

From this wave-washed mound
Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me;
Then reach on with thought till it be drowned,
Miles and miles distant though the last line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,
Still, leagues beyond leagues, there is more sea;

(*The Choice*)

or that of *Autumn Idleness* where in the mellow sunlight of November

With a blessing every glade receives
High salutation; while from the hillock caves
The deer gaze calling, dappled white and dun,
As if being foresters of old, the sun

Hath marked them with the shade of forest leaves;

is only to be rarely breathed in the later sonnets. Following the poet, the reader enters into the willow-wood with its shaded well and meets

the shadowy figure of Love and even more shadowy denizens of the willow-wood who are doomed to walk there in "soul-struck widowhood", long and longer hours, "one life-long night". He now describes briefly and in vague outline, and very often in the later sonnets he makes a single metaphor do duty for a whole passage of description. How devastatingly is the stark sense of futility in the poet's soul symbolized in

The groundwhirl of the perished leaves of Hope! (*Lovesight*)

The change of atmosphere noted above has its counterpart in the development of Rossetti's art. Briefly stated, the progression was from his early naivete of phrase and simplicity of conception to a highly wrought style and rigorous brainwork. The simplicity of *The Landmark* (1854), for instance, is in striking contrast to the sophistication of *Transfigured Life* (1873).

These are some of the evident inferences which are suggested by a chronological study of the sonnets of *The House of Life* and are apt to escape notice in Rossetti's sequence.

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SHAW'S RESPONSE TO SHAKESPEARE

BISHNUPADA BERA

"OTHERS abide our question—thou art free,"—so sang Matthew Arnold in 1849 in the traditional way. For ages Shakespeare has been set on a pedestal and adored. Bernard Shaw whose business as "a leg puller" is "to say what other persons do not say—what they leave out,"¹ ridicules this unquestioning adoration of Shakespeare as "Bardolatry" and debunks this mighty god of the Pantheon. Even as early as 1883 Shaw's attitude towards Shakespeare finds an expression in the concluding lines of the last novel of his "nonage", *An Unsocial Socialist*: "The first literary result of the foundation of our industrial system upon the profits of piracy and slave-trading was Shakespeare. It is our misfortune that the sordid misery and hopeless horror of his view of man's destiny is still so appropriate to English society that we even today regard him as not for an age, but for all time. But the poetry of despair will not outlive despair itself. Your nineteenth-century novelists are only the tail of Shakespeare. Don't tie yourself to it; it is fast wriggling into oblivion."² In an article in *The World* on 24 January 1894, Shaw questions the appropriateness of Feste's song "Come away. Death" in Act ii, Sc. iv of *Twelfth Night* as a song to be sung to his boon companions, and as Arnold Daly has discarded the song altogether in his revival of *Twelfth Night*, Shaw asserts "the innate superiority of the modern American manager to Shakespear."³ In *The Saturday Review* of 26 September 1896, he expresses his attitude to Shakespeare in unequivocal terms: "With the single exception of Homer, there is no eminent writer, not even Sir Walter Scott, whom I can despise so entirely as I despise, Shakespeare when I measure my mind against his. The intensity of my impatience with him occasionally reaches such a pitch that it would be positively a relief to me dig him up and throw stones at him, knowing as I do how incapable he and his worshippers are of understanding any less obvious form of indignity. To read *Cymbeline* and to think of Goethe, of Wagner, of Ibsen, is, for me, to imperil the habit of studied moderation of statement which years of public responsibility as a journalist have made almost second nature to me."⁴ In the same article under the caption "Blaming the Bard" the following apparently contradictory lines appear: "But I am bound to add that I pity the

the man who cannot enjoy Shakespear. He has outlasted thousands of abler thinkers, and will outlast a thousand more When I was twenty I knew everybody in Shakespear, from Hamlet to Abhorson, much more intimately than I knew my living contemporaries; and to this day, if the name of Pistol or Polonius catches my eye in a newspaper, I turn to the passage with more curiosity than if the name were that of—but perhaps I had better not mention any one in particular.”⁵ In fact, it is Shakespear’s “enormous command of word-music”⁶ rather than his competence as an “artist-philosophers” which had won the heart of Shaw. Still, it is surprising that Shaw, to whom Shakespeare was like “mother’s milk”⁷ could be so hard on “The immortal William”.⁸ The change in his attitude towards Shakespeare should be attributed to the advent of Ibsen on the London boards. Shaw’s observation in *The Saturday Review* of 26 March 1898 provides the necessary clue—“.....the literary side of the mission of Ibsen here has been to rescue this unhappy country from its centuries of slavery to Shakespear.”⁹ As an arch enemy of superstition Shaw throws an open challenge to Bardolatry. His letter to Ellen Terry, dated 27 January 1897 is very clear on this point.” The theatre is my battering ram as much as the platform or the press: that is why I want to drag it to the front. My capers are part of a bigger design than you think: Shakespear, for instance, is to me one of the towers of the Bastille, and down he must come.”¹⁰ Shaw’s open challenge to Shakespeare appears in the form of an article under the caption “England’s Delicate Compliment to Ibsen” in *The Saturday Review* of 26 March 1898. In this Shaw scolds William Archer for placing Shakespeare in the same class with Ibsen as a thinker and makes the following observation: “In any language of the world *Brand*, *Peer Gynt*, and *Emperor or Galilean* prove their author a thinker of extraordinary penetration, and a moralist of international influence. Turn from them to *To be or not to be*, or *The Seven Ages of Man*, and imagine if you can, anybody more critical than a village schoolmaster being imposed on by such platitudinous fudge. The comparison does not honour Ibsen: it makes Shakespeare ridiculous: and for both their sakes it should not be drawn. If we cannot for once let the poor Bard alone, let us apologize to Ibsen for our foolish worship of a foolish collection of shallow proverbs in blank verse.”¹¹

This is decidedly almost a transference of allegiance from Shakespeare to Ibsen. The reason is not far to seek. By 1894 *The Pillars of Society*, *A Doll’s House*, *Ghosts*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Rosmersholm*, *The Lady from the Sea*, *The Master Builder* and *The Wild Duck* have all been put on the London Stage and the “Ibsen-yeast” works deep in the heart of Shaw. The

foundation of his faith in Shakespeare's supremacy has been rudely shaken and the conviction grows in his mind that Ibsen is a greater dramatist than Shakespeare. This may justly be inferred from the following letter of Shaw to Reginald Golding Bright:¹²

29 Fitzroy Square W
11th November 1895.

* * * * *

Dear Sir,

1

As to what to read, read everything you feel curious about. It's quite possible that your real interest may not lie in the theatre at all. But in any case, read dramatic literature, not histories or criticisms of it. Read three or four of the most famous plays of Moliere and Victor Hugo; and sample Beaumarchais, Voltaire, De Musset, Augier, and Dumas *filis*, until you know their styles. Read all Goethe's plays and a lot of Schiller's. Read a rhymed copy of Dryden's, a play of Wycherley's, some of Congreve's, several of Sheridan, a Boucicault, a Robertson. Read Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes (the Greek literature is very short). Get translations if you don't know the language. Read them with a notion of their chronological order *Read Ibsen all through*. Also Cibber's Apology and any memoirs of actors that you can unearth. That will do for a beginning

In haste,
G. Bernard Shaw

It should be significant to note here that Shakespeare has been excluded from the list altogether—a fact which clearly reveals Shaw's changed attitude towards Shakespeare.

In 1896 Shaw laments that Henry Irving, Ellen Terry and others give themselves to Shakespeare rather than the (new drama) of Ibsen. The following portion from a letter of G. B. S. to Ellen Terry, dated 26 March, 1896 is revealing:—

"The most depressing rumours are about here as to the next Lyceum production—*Julius Caesar* or some such obsolete rubbish, with Wilson Barrett as Pontius Pilate. Will nothing persuade H. I. that Queen Anne is dead? There is *Peer Gynt* ready to his hand. Can he read it without swearing to be the first man to drown that cook and peel that onion on the English stage? And how beautiful you would be as Solveig! Million millions! Is H. I. blind? or is he no actor at all, but only a Shakespeare-struck antiquary that he passes by the great chances of his life as if they were pieces of orange peel laid in his path expressly to capsize him?"¹³

Great is Shaw's disappointment when *Peer Gynt* is produced

in Paris by Lugne-Poe at The Theatre de L'oeuvre on 12 November 1896. Shaw comments on this production in *The Saturday Review* thus: "The humiliation of the English stage is now complete, Paris, that belated capital, which makes the intelligent Englishman imagine himself back in the Dublin and Edinburgh of the 18th century, has been beforehand with us in producing *Peer Gynt*."¹⁴

Shaw's preface to *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence* explains his present impatience with Shakespeare. "With Lyceum Shakespear I had no patience. Shakespear even in his integrity, could not satisfy the hungry minds whose spiritual and intellectual appetites had been whetted and even created by Ibsen; . . .¹⁵ The motive is explained further in *The Daily News* of 13 April 1905: "We are disposed to agree that we are making too much of a fetish of our Swan. He was the greatest intellect we have produced, but the tendency to regard him as above criticism is bad. Shakespear is supreme because he embodied most completely the whole range of emotions. But they were human emotions, and his greatness is due to that fact. It is false admiration to worship him as an infallible semi-god."¹⁶

By 1897 Shaw becomes an ardent admirer of Ibsen and he asserts Ibsen's supremacy as a dramatist. The following conversation between Shaw and a correspondent on the refusal of *The Man of Destiny* by the Lyceum Theatre Shows which way Shaw's mind is working.

"Somewhat disappointed that we are not to see your play, Mr. Shaw." "You need not be. My reputation as a dramatist grows with every play of mine that is not produced. Besides, Irving should go to the real man of Destiny—Ibsen. *A Doll's House*, *Borkman*, eh?"¹⁷

In his review of William Archer's English version of *John Gabriel Borkman* as "The New Ibsen play" on 30 January 1897 Shaw proclaims Ibsen as the undisputed head of the British dramatic literature. "If every manager considers it due to himself to produce nothing cheaper than *The Prisoner of Zenda*, not to mention the splendors of the Lyceum, then goodbye to high dramatic art. The managers will, perhaps, retort that if high dramatic art means Ibsen, then they ask for nothing better than to get rid of it. I am too polite to reply, bluntly, that high dramatic art *does* mean Ibsen; Ibsen's plays are at this moment the head of the dramatic body; and that though an actor-manager can, and often does, do without a head, dramatic art cannot. Already Ibsen is a European power. . . ."¹⁸

* * * * *

"For my own part, I do not endorse all Ibsen's views: I even prefer my own plays to his in some respects; but I hope I know a great man from a little one as far as my comprehension of such little things goes. Criticism may be pardoned for every mistake except that of not knowing a man of rank in literature when it meets one."¹⁹

In an article entitled "Ibsen triumphant" on 22 May 1897 Shaw proclaims Ibsen as "a much greater dramatist than Shakespear."²⁰ In his letter to Bright dated 2nd May, 1900 Shaw holds that "Shakespear's epoch is over."²¹ It is in 1905 that Shaw assigns reasons for pulling down Shakespeare. He observes in *The Daily News* in April, 1905: "Shakespear's weakness lies in his complete deficiency in that highest sphere of thought, in which poetry embraces religion, philosophy, morality and the bearing of these on communities, which is sociology."²² To prove Ibsen's superiority to Shakespeare on this point, Shakespeare is constantly held in contrast to Ibsen and in this comparison Ibsen comes out with "a double first-class", whereas Shakespeare comes out "hardly anywhere."

In his lecture on Shakespeare at Kensington Town Hall on 12 April 1905, Shaw asserts that Shakespeare achieved popularity by deliberately "pandering to the public taste for romantic nonsense."²³

In a postscript to his *Preface to Irrational Knot* (1905) Shaw asserts Ibsen's superiority to Shakespeare. Reviewing this second noble of his "nonage" Shaw writes: "...it is one of those fictions in which the morality is original and not ready-made. Now this quality is the true diagnostic of the first order in literature, and indeed in all the arts, including the art of life. It is, for example, the distinction that sets Shakespear's *Hamlet* above his other plays, and that sets Ibsen's work as a whole above Shakespear's work as a whole. Shakespear's morality is a mere reach-me-down....Ibsen's morality is original all through.... By writers of the second order the ready-made morality is accepted as the basis of all moral judgment and the criticism of the characters they portray, even when their genius forces them to represent their most attractive heroes and heroines as violating the ready-made code in all directions. Far be it for me to pretend that the first order is more readable than the second! Shakespear, Scott, Dickens, Dumas père are not, to say the least, less readable than Euripides and Ibsen. Nor is the first order always more constructive; ... still, the first order remains the first order and the second the second for all that: no man who shuts his eyes and opens his mouth when religion and morality are offered to him on a long spoon can share the same Parnassian bench with those who make an original contribution to religion and morality, were it only a criticism."²⁴

It should be significant to note here that Shaw places himself and Ibsen in "the first order in literature", while Shakespeare is relegated to the second.

Bernard Shaw's letter, appended to *Tolstory on Shakespear* (New York, 1906) indicates how he [Shaw] has striven hard to open English eyes to the emptiness of Shakespear's philosophy, to the superficiality and second-handedness of his morality, to his weakness and incoher-

ence as a thinker, to his snobbery, his vulgar prejudices, his ignorance, his disqualifications of all sorts for the philosophic eminence claimed for him."²⁵

In a chapter entitled "The technical novelty in Ibsen's plays" in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* Shaw makes a categorical statement regarding Shakespeare's survival: "Anyhow, the fact remains that Shakespeare survives by what he has in common with Ibsen, and not by what he has in common with Webster and the rest."²⁶

The following observation of Shaw which appeared in *The Fortnightly Review* of August, 1919 under the caption "On Cutting Shakespeare" is an echo of what he had said in 1898 on Shakespeare in relation to Ibsen. "Then take my own celebrated criticism of Shakespeare, written when the Bard, like all the other dramatists, was staggering under the terrible impact of Ibsen. Can men whose intellectual standards have been screwed up to Goethe's *Faust*, Wagner's *Ring* and 'deep revolving' Ibsen's soul histories, be expected to sit and listen to such penny-reading, twaddle as *The Seven Ages of Man*, or even Hamlet's soliloquy on suicide? Out with the lot of them, then: let us cut the cackle and come to 'osses'."²⁷

Frank Harris reviews the whole question with admirable clarity. "Shaw's anti-Shakespeare campaign under my *Saturday Review* editorship was all the more unexpected because I was one of the few London editors to whom Shakespeare was more than a name. I was saturated with Shakespeare. That I should be the editor of an attack on Shakespeare of unheard-of ferocity was the one thing I should have declared confidently could never possibly occur to me. What made the adventure order was, first, that Shaw who delivered the attack, was as full of Shakespeare as I; second, that though we were both scandalized by the sacrilege we were committing, neither of us could honestly alter a word in one of the articles. They were outrageous; but there was nothing to withdraw; nothing to soften, nothing that would be modified without bringing down the whole critical edifice."

"The explanation is simple enough. Shaw's first shot at Shakespeare was fired in 1894. Ibsen's first broadside in England caught the London theatre between wind and water in 1889. Shaw had written his *Quintessence of Ibsenism* in the meantime, and was judging everything on and off the stage by the standard set up by the terrible Norwegian. Many lesser men fell short of that standard; but Shakespeare was the most conspicuous victim. 'It is useless to talk of Shakespeare's depth now', said Shaw: 'there is nothing left but his music. Even the famous delineation of character by Molière-Shakespeare-Scott-Dumas père is only a trick of mimicry. Our Bard is knocked out of time: there is not a feature left on his face. Hamlet is a spineless effigy beside Peer Gynt, Imogen a doll beside Nora Helmer, Othello a convention of

Italian opera beside Julian.' And it was true. Only in the sonnets could we find Shakespear getting to the depth at which Ibsen worked."²⁸

Shaw's views on Shakespeare in relation to Ibsen are evidently extreme, but these views are useful as they show the way his mind was working. Towards the end of his life Shaw must have modified his views, as his postscript (1931) to *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (1906) clearly indicates. "The foregoing was prefaced to a reprint of a selection from my criticisms entitled *Dramatic Opinions and Essays*, edited in America by the late James Huneker. Let me add now what I should have added then: that a certain correction should be made, specially in reading my onslaught on Shakespear; but also in valuing my vigorous slating of my contemporaries, for the devastating effect produced in the nineties by the impact of Ibsen on the European Theatre. Until then Shakespear had been conventionally ranked as a giant among psychologists and philosophers. Ibsen dwarfed him so absurdly in those aspects that it became impossible for the moment to take him as an intellectual force. And if this was Shakespear's fate, what could the others expect? The appearance of a genius of the first order is always hard on his competitors..... If my head had not been full of Ibsen and Wagner in the nineties I should have been kinder and more reasonable in my demands. And also less amusing. So forgive; but make the necessary allowances."²⁹

"So forgive"—these two words are enough to show Shaw's late thinking that he should have been "kinder and more reasonable" in his onslaught on Shakespeare.

Shaw's true attitude towards Shakespeare late in life is clearly indicated in his observations on April 23, 1925, on the occasion of the celebration of the three hundred and sixty-first anniversary of Shakespeare's birth at Stratford-on-Avon: "I myself am a humble follower—sometimes not so humble as I ought to be—in Shakespeare's footsteps."³⁰

It should be significant to note here that besides Shaw's impatience and irritation on his hopeless failure to find any drama of purpose in the whole range of Shakespeare or any attempt on the part of Shakespeare "to get down to the roots of the evil and imposture he saw everywhere",³¹ there is a psychological reason for knocking the "Immortal Bard" off his pedestal—his desire to take his revenge on Henry Irving who, in spite of his repeated requests, refused to admit the New Drama to his cathedral of the Lyceum Theatre. By belittling Shakespeare Shaw, in fact, belittled Henry Irving, a "Shakespeare-struck antiquary."³² Shakespeare has really been used as "a stick with which to bastinado Irving."³³

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STERNE'S ART OF CHARACTERIZATION

AMBARNATH CHATTERJEE

WHILE introducing the character of Uncle Toby in the novel, Sterne says that he will not follow the usual methods adopted by writers in drawing characters. Some draw their characters in a high-flown, melodramatic, or idealistic manner (drawing by 'wind instruments'). Some again will draw a man's character by his external actions ('evacuations'), ignoring his inner life, ideas and motives ('repletions'). Some swear by realism and write but what they see; they are like 'the Pentagraphic Brethren of the brush' skilled 'in taking copies'. Others, again, will draw you 'in the Camera' or private chamber which method is unfair, because it produces an inverted image of the object and will represent you 'in some of your most ridiculous attitudes'. Our author will not use any of these devices of characterization. He will draw his Uncle Toby's character from his 'hobby-horse', that is, by his ruling passion. Elsewhere too—in a letter to a correspondent, and in his sermon, *The Character of Herod*—he says that a man's character is best drawn by his ruling passion; for the various shapes we put on are but 'so many different attempts to gratify the same governing appetite'.

(a) *Ruling passion:*

Now, this concept of ruling passion was widely prevalent in Sterne's time, though the idea was not new. Ben Jonson explained his concept of humour (derived from medieval medicine), on which he based his comedy, in these words :

"As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluents, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be humour"

(*Every Man Out Of His Humour*, Introduction)

This 'humour' means the predominant disposition, or idea, in a man. Locke, from whom much of 18th century thought was derived, conceived the 'Predominant passions or inclinations' as one of the factors leading to error of understanding. Earlier, Dryden, following Jonson, defined humour as

"some extravagant 'habit, passion, or affection, particular to

some one person, by the oddness of which he is immediately distinguished from the rest of men”.

(*Of Dramatic Poesy*, I, 73)

Pope called the ruling passion ‘the mind’s disease’. It was believed that character was governed by the ruling passion. Lord Chesterfield advised his son on the need of finding out a man’s ‘predominant passion’ to know his character. The philosopher Hume honestly admitted his love of literary fame to be his ‘ruling passion’. Fielding noted ‘some fine women’ being led by the ‘ruling principle’ of vanity. His Sophia Western says that “Our inclinations are not in our power”—to which the wise Allworthy agrees, adding that “we cannot force our inclinations, much less can they be directed by another”,

The splenetic Smollett charges the entire French nation with the ‘ruling passion’ of vanity. Dr. Johnson’s Quisquilius has his ruling passion in ‘patriotism’. The concept overflowed into the 19th century, when Hazlitt mocked at it as a silly obsession.

Sterne made good use of this ruling passion, while drawing his characters. About the vital relationship between a man and his hobby-horse, he says, in his free comic vein—

A man and his Hobby-Horse, tho’ I cannot say that they act and react exactly after the same manner in which the soul and body do upon each other: Yet doubtless there is a communication between them of some kind: and my opinion rather is, that there is something in it more of the manner of electrified bodies,—and that, by means of the heated parts of the rider, which come immediately into contact with the back of the Hobby-Horse,—by long journeys and much friction, it so happens, that the body of the rider is at length filled as full of Hobby-Horsical matter as it can hold;—so that if you are able to give but a clear description of the nature of the one, you may form a pretty exact notion of the genius and character of the other.

(*Tristram Shandy*, I, 24; 77-8)

In other words, first entering a person’s mind in a casual manner, the ruling passion rules his whole being, and determines his character. First entering ‘upon the footing of mere whims’ they end ‘in downright earnest’. But, with Sterne, the ruling passion is not necessarily an affliction. While Walter Shandy’s exclusive absorption into philosophy is his besetting sin, in that it clouds his common sense and hampers his humanity (see character-sketch of Walter Shandy), his brother Toby’s ruling passion for the science of fortification is not. Walter’s hobby-horse took away his peace of mind and begot his spleen (‘that little subacid soreness of humour’). Toby’s ruling passion, on the other hand, was a spiritual delight to him. Sterne says, “To one

who took pleasure in the *happy state* of others, there could not have been a greater sight in the world" (*T. S.* VI, 22 : 464, italics mine) than to see Toby engaged in his toy-wars on the bowling-green. In the beginning, of course, the author suggests that Toby had not acted well in giving 'himself up to the government' of his ruling passion, and even utters a warning against it. The reason obviously is that Toby's obsession with the science of fortification prevented his wound from being completely cured which later resulted in his disappointment in love, Sterne regarding love as the supreme bliss of life. Nevertheless, we are told that Toby's heart was 'all benignity' without its fulfilment in the tender passion. In an inspired passage, Sterne says of the blessedness of the bowling-green. Moreover, Toby's hobby-horse did not rule his character absolutely ; he could dismount it, to respond to the call of humanity—as he did when he left his 'campaigns' for a while to attend to the dying Le Fever. Then, unlike his brother, Toby can also sometimes get out of his ruling passion and place himself in another's position. Thus, while he has no faith in his brother's theory of names, he becomes greatly worried on his account for the mis-naming of Tristram. We see, therefore, that though Toby's ruling passion for the science of fortification distinguishes his character, it is neither a flaw in his character, nor is it his predominant or exclusive characteristic ; nor, again, is it at odds with his humanity, which is the outstanding feature in his character. Thus, while using the prevailing concept of the ruling passion, Sterne does not follow it slavishly. While it exercises an over-all power on character, it is not necessarily an undesirable feature, nor always the sole determinant of character.

(b) *Psychological analysis :*

Locke located the identity of a person in his continuing consciousness. Following Locke, Sterne apprehended the human personality in psychological terms. This leads him to analyse the minutiae of feeling and mental states. Sterne's supreme interest is a human being, who exists in his feelings and in the glow of his consciousness. At Montreuil, traveller Tristram's chief object of observation is not architecture, or manners, but Janatone, the inn-keeper's daughter. And Janatone interests him not objectively—by her rank or office, or by her physical beauty, or for any sensational event about her, but because she is a human being, who, being liable to decay, must be 'measured' in her present subjective existence, in her continuing consciousness : "... he who measures thee, Janatone, must do it now—thou carriest the principles of change within thy frame". (*T. S.*, VII, 9 ; 507) How surprisingly close it is to the Bergsonian concept of the human

personality as a perpetual continuation of feeling, which "itself is a being which lives and develops and is therefore constantly changing" (Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, 132-3)! In this, Sterne is different from the other novelists of his age, who bring about an ordered external world in illustration of their moral precepts or their philosophy. Their novel is a string of incidents or adventures, with or without organic unity. Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Austen 'and others, are all interested in character, in their different ways; but their stories are arranged adventures of the principal character or characters. Of them, Richardson is most interested in recording the detailed mental states of his characters (through their personal letters); but still, 'action' is very important for him, as can be seen, for example, in the interest created by the advances of Pamela's young master, her skilful evading of them, and the ultimate triumph of her virtue. So, in *Clarissa* our interest is focussed on the incidents leading to the climax of the heroine's self-sacrifice. And so with all conventional novelists; their novel, with all its character-interest, is more or less an episodic illustration of set ideas—such as, reward of virtue (*Pamela*), or vindication of it (*Clarissa*), the evils of imprudence (*Tom Jones*), the mistake of 'first impressions' (*Pride and Prejudice*). Sterne cannot proceed with action in their manner. He was baiting the conventional story-teller, when he wrote, in his account of the Shandy brothers getting down the stairs:

Is it not a shame to make two chapters of what passed in going down one pair of stairs? For we are got no further yet than to the first landing, and there are fifteen more steps down to the bottom; and for aught I know, as my father and my uncle Toby are in a talking numour, there may be as many chapters as steps. (*T.S.*, IV, 10: 291)

This 'talking' is more important to Sterne than getting down the stairs. The Shandy brothers' going down the few steps took narrator Tristram five chapters (BK IV, Chs. 9-13), which tell us of 'what passed in their (Shandy brothers') minds, as well as in his (narrator's) own.

It is psychological, not episodic, interest which sustains the Shandy world. Very little happens in this world. The few things that happen—for example, Tristram's birth and broken nose, the christening blunder, Bobby's death (which is merely reported), Tristram's window-sash accident, Walter's writing his *Tristrapaedia*—are but occasions to spark off successive series of ideas. After Tristram's accident, for example, the philosophic Mr. Shandy gathers up his books on circumcision, and begins reading from them and discussing the many learned views on the subject. His reference to the 'polemic divines' in this connection provokes a long quotation (from Rabelais) from

Parson Yorick as an illustration of their nature. Yorick's reading from the book reminds Mr. Shandy of his own book, *Tristrapædia*, from which he begins discussing. The Shandy parlour is back to life again. Uncle Toby lights his pipe, Parson Yorick draws his chair close to Walter Shandy, Corporal Trim snuffs the candle, Walter stirs up the fire and taking up his book, and coughing thrice, launches his discourse. The various theories of the origin of society, of the father's right over his child, of the son's duty towards his father, of Catechism, and so on, are discussed. When Walter takes up his chapter on Health, the ancient Hippocrates and the modern Lord Verulam (Bacon) come in; Toby's lay interpretation, in his own military terms, of his brother's learned theory of health is followed by an appropriate illustration, given at the instance of Toby, by Corporal Trim, of 'radical heat and radical moisture' from their past life in the army. Then comes Walter's enunciation of his scheme of scholastic education for his son. We have travelled far from Tristram's accident, but we have travelled true to the mental activity of the characters. Meantime, Dr. Slop (who had been called by Mrs. Shandy) pops in for a while and goes out, and then reappears, for his ridiculous encounter with maid Susannah during the dressing of *Tristram's* wound. The train of ideas released by the accident, in the minds of the several characters, become more important and interesting than the accident itself.

The significance of the ass scene in the novel is as psychological as it is humanistic. The ass—it may be remembered—has strayed to Tristram's hotel-door, and Tristram silently and lovingly converses with him and even offers him a macaroon. Then turning the situation inward, he, as narrator, analyses what really might have been his motive in that act of offering the macaroon to the ass. Was it sheer altruism, or secret satisfaction of a hidden ego? Perhaps the latter. He writes:

... at this moment that I am telling it, my heart smites me, that there was more of pleasantry in the conceit of seeing how an ass would eat a macaroon—than of benevolence in giving him one, which presided in the act. (*T.S.*, VII, 32: 543)

The same psychological interest makes the life of his *Sentimental Journey*. The chapter, *The Address*, for example, records no real address; for the 'sentimental traveller' could not actually meet Monsieur Duc de Choiseul. It is only an account of what passed in the author's mind as he went along to meet the dignitary. He was going for his passport (without which he had come from England)—that is, to beg a favour of the Duke. This was against his grain; but there was no help; it was 'an act of compulsion', not of choice; for, without the passport he stood the risk of being clapped in the

Bastille. So he was going to Choiseul, forming many plans of servile address. He was ashamed of himself for this, and felt he "deserved the Bastille for every one of them". He began "conceiving the attitudes and tones to wreath myself into Monsieur le Duc de C's good graces". But before doing so, he must first observe the Monsieur and try to know his character from his physical expressions and attitudes, and then make his address accordingly. But why all this?—he asks himself again; and continues musing on the equality of man, on the virtue of self-respect; he then decides that, instead of feeling small before the great dignitary, he would conduct himself 'with all the gaiety and debonairness in the world'. But this will be the other extreme. So, at last he makes up his mind, that he should not worry about his Address; he tells himself, "A heart at ease, Yorick, flies into no extremes—'tis ever on its center". The monologue helped him regain his self-confidence. As the planned interview did not ultimately come about, the Address exists only as a psychological reality. In the same manner, the real interest in the scene of the Temptation and its Conquest, in the *Journey*, is neither romantic, nor moral, but psychological. Here the conflict of desire and piety, of sense and spirit, in the 'sentimental traveller', has been drawn in the form of a complicated inward experience of a Temptation which he ultimately conquers. There is a subtle analysis of a state of mind, trembling nervously in the grip of desire which almost broke his self-control and brought him to a state of near-capitulation.

Particularly interesting is Sterne's analysis of the different psychological responses of his characters, released simultaneously by a single situation. Thus Phutatorius's awkward and sudden cry ('Z—de') at the Visitation Dinner excites different ideas in the gathering, and at the same time. The author first explains the nature of the mysterious exclamation, by saying that it was "in a tone of voice, somewhat between that of a man in amazement and one in bodily pain". Then he makes an analysis of its varied reception in the several minds of the gathering. And, in his usual humorous vein, he indicates four kinds of responses. A few, having nice ears for music, were perplexed at the cry, which, though it was a good concord of sounds indicating amazement and physical pain, was entirely out of place there. Some others, who knew little of music, took the cry to be an exordium to an oration, which—they thought—Phutatorius was going to make. Some again took it to be an involuntary and meaningless oath, while some interpreted it as 'a real and substantial oath' meant for Yorick, for whom Phutatorius had no love. But none of them knew the real cause of the exclamation—namely, the ludicrous fall of the chestnut. We note this simultaneity of psychological responses not only in a comic situation, but also in the serious situation—as the one brought

about by Bobby's death. As Trim breaks the sad news to the other servants in the kitchen, they grieve from their hearts; but lightning sparks of selfish calculations instantaneously flash upon their minds. Maid Susannah thinks of the 'green satin night-gown' of Mrs. Shandy. The 'fat foolish scullion', who—we are told—was kept by Mr. Shandy 'for her simplicity', silently thanks her own stars that she had not died herself. And Obadiah is concerned about the extra work his master, that is, Walter Shandy, would put him to in reclaiming the Oxmoor common, now that his (W. Shandy's) other plan of sending Bobby abroad had miscarried. Sterne's characters are realized for us not through what they do, for they 'do' nothing practically, but through what they talk and think and feel in the different situations. This, instead of boring us, becomes even more interesting than external adventure; because here we tap man's activity at its inward source in the mind or heart. Sterne—we should remember—says in his novel that, in order to understand him one must thoroughly know Locke, whose *Essay*, he reminds us, is "a history-book ... of what passes in a man's own mind".

(c) *Physical gesture :*

One of the beauties of Sterne's art is his depiction of the body-mind relationship in his characters. That Sterne attached great importance to the psychological significance of gesturing can be seen from his statement, that

A man's body and his mind ... are exactly like a jerkin, and a jerkin's lining;—rumple the one,—you rumple the other. (*Ibid*, III, 4; 165)

Sterne's characters communicate by their gestures, tones of voice, expressions of the eye, as much as by their words or action. Walter Shandy's mental transition from discord (caused by his son's broken nose) to harmony, is signified by the transition from one attitude (lying prostrate on the bed) to another (getting up from the bed). The novelist records minute little details of Walter's lying prostrate on the bed and of his getting up. This is how Walter falls on his bed:

he threw himself prostrate across his bed in the wildest disorder imaginable, but at the same time in the most lamentable attitude of man borne down with sorrows ... The palm of his right hand, as he fell upon the bed, receiving his forehead, and covering the greatest part of both his eyes, gently sunk down with his head (his elbow giving way backwards) till his nose touched the quilt;—his left arm hung insensible over the side of the bed, his knuckles reclining upon the handle of the chamber-pot, which peeped out beyond the valance—his right

leg (his left being drawn up towards his body)—hung half over the side of the bed, the edge of it pressing upon his shin-bone. (*Ibid*, III, 29 ; 222-3)

Sterne's comic intent of holding up to ridicule the dry philosophic grief of Walter Shandy gains effect by this presentation of the minutiae of Walter's physical movements. The amorous Wadman, who had matrimonial designs towards the good Toby, overhears with excitement the conversation of Toby and Trim ; and when the conversation turns to Toby's wound (in the groin), her curiosity leaps up ; she "instantly stopped her breath—unpinned her mob at the chin, and stood up upon one leg—". (VIII, 19 : 592) This posture is like a dumb show ; it reveals not only the lady's mental state, which was one of burning curiosity in a matter very delicate and vital for her, but it creates also the atmosphere of silent overhearing.

The *Sentimental Journey* is full of such dumb shows. As the owner of the hotel learns that the 'sentimental traveller' has come to Paris without a passport, he suddenly retires three steps from his 'as from an infected person', while the traveller's new-found, faithful valet La Fleur advances three steps towards his master "with that sort of movement which a good soul makes to succour a distress'd one". (*Sentimental Journey*, 73) The contrary simultaneous gestures of the hotel-owner and La Fleur bespeak their minds more eloquently than words—the former suspecting the traveller as an undesirable person, the latter sympathizing with him in his difficulty and eager to help. About La Fleur's gesture, the author says that "from that single trait, I knew his character as perfectly, and could rely upon it as firmly, as if he had served me with fidelity for seven years". (p. 73) As he goes to meet Monsieur le Duc de C—for his passport, the author plans to read the Monsieur's character from his face and 'the turns and expressions of his body and limbs'.

Facial expressions and looks, too, are significant in portraying mind. As the author meets poor Maria's mother at Moulinés, her very looks tell him the sad story of her daughter even "before she open'd her mouth". The grisset's repeated alternate looks at the gloves, to the window, and at her customer, the 'sentimental traveller', and his following exactly her example, in the Gloves scene in *S.J.*, beautifully reveal their warmed-up hearts and a delicate hesitancy of speech. The author adds :

She had a quick black eye, and shot through two such long and silken eye-lashes with such penetration, that she look'd into my very heart and reins. (*Ibid*, 59)

and he felt that he "lost considerably in every attack".

The rendering of gestures into appropriate language is called 'translation' by the author. This 'translation' of gestures, of "the

several turns of looks and limbs, with all their inflections and delineations, into plain words". (*Ibid*, 61) is a vital aid to mutual understanding and fellowship. For his own part—the author says :

"I do it so mechanically, that when I walk the streets of London, I go translating all the way ; and have more than once stood behind in the circle, where not three words have been said, and have brought off twenty different dialogues with me, which I could have fairly wrote down and sworn to". (*Ibid*, 61)

When we note this body-mind equation in Sterne, we find it difficult to accept J. B. Priestley's view that the Shandies, unlike the great comic characters of Dickens, are 'funny in the idea', not 'in the actual expression of themselves'. In fact, Sterne is rarely satisfied with merely reporting a mental state, he must present it visually—in minute details of posture. The simple Toby's sudden interruption to the self-important Dr. Slop's discourse on the science of obstetrics, confounded Slop and irritated Walter. Walter's splenetic excitement brought a suffusion of blood on his countenance, and is revealed in his instinctive comic movements. We find him

taking his wig from off his head with his right hand, and with his left pulling out a striped India handkerchief from his right coat pocket, in order to rub his head, as he argued the point with my uncle Toby. (*T.S.*, III, 2 ; 162)

Sterne attaches significance to Walter's use of the right hand, (for taking off the wig), instead of the left, for the sake of the comic effect ; for, had Walter used the left hand for the wig, he would have easily taken out his handkerchief by his right hand from his right pocket ; and this would not make him the comic figure he became—with the 'violent knitting' of his eye-brows and 'the extravagant contortion of his body'—by the 'transverse zigzagery' of his approach to the right coat pocket by the left hand. The author says here that "the circumstances with which every thing in this world is begrit, give every thing in this world its size and shape." (III, 2 ; 163) As Walter sets himself ready for an oration on 'the mystery' of life, he at once took the Socratic posture "so finely painted by Raffael":

he holds the fore-finger of his left hand between the fore-finger and the thumb of his right, and seems as if he was saying to the livertine he is reclaiming—"Your grant me this—and this : and this, I don't ask of you—they follow of themselves in course". (*Ibid*, IV, 7 ; 288)

As Toby cuts his brother's inspired discourse on the philosophy of noses, with the unphilosophical question, "Can noses be dissolved?" Walter's comic discomfiture is appropriately expressed in his posture:

My father thrust back his chair—rose up—put on his hat—took four long strides to the door—jerked it open—thrust his

head half way out—shut the door again—took no notice of the bad hinge—returned to the table—plucked my mother's thread-paper out of Slawkenbergius's book—went hastily to his bureau—walked slowly back—twisted my mother's thread-paper about his thumb—unbuttoned his waistcoat—threw my mother's thread-paper into the fire—bit the satin pin-cushion in two, filled his mouth with bran. (*Ibid*, III, 41 ; 246)

In the same manner, the comic effect and charm of Toby Shandy's character derive from the presentation of his physical attitudes, which are correlated to his mental movements. Thus, on one occasion, as he finds his brother's philosophic exposition on a rather silly subject intolerable, he gently takes off his hand from his brother's knee (on which he had put his hand a moment before), reclines his body slowly back in the chair, raises his head

till he could just see the cornice of the room, and then directing the buccinatory muscles along his cheeks, and the orbicular muscles around his lips to do their duty—he whistled *Lillabullero*. (*Ibid*, III, 6 ; 168)

Not only the Shandy brothers, the other characters, too, exist in their appropriate stance and gesture, which provide life to Sterne's comedy. Toby and Trim talk of fighting, and at once enact its various positions with instinctive gesture, with whatever aid they find ready at hand—namely, the chairs in the room, Toby's crutch and stool, Trim's stick, and so on. Dr. Slop's mental confusion at Toby's sudden reference to the 'prodigious armies in Flanders' is expressed in his

looking with that perplexed vacuity of eye which puzzled souls generally stare with—first in my uncle Toby's face—then in his (i.e. Walter Shandy's)—then up—then down—then east—east and by east, and so on,—coasting it along by the plinth of the wainscot till he had got to the opposite point of the compass,—and... he had actually begun to count the brass nails upon the arm of his chair. (*Ibid*, III, 1 ; 162)

As the funny Didius rises to make his learned speech he is presented to us as "laying his right hand with his fingers spread upon his breast". This posture, while indicating the seriousness of Didius's purpose, heightens the comic effect of the scene. Sterne thus presents the Shandy world as funny, not only 'in the idea', but also 'in the actual expression of themselves'. The 'idea' is presented in the 'expression'; they are correlated.

While the physical movements of Dickens's characters are broad—by which the great humorist evokes boisterous laughter as, for example, in the case of Jerry Cruncher's 'rolling and surging' in bed under the 'patchwork counterpane', as he was waking up, "until he rose above the surface, his spiky hair, looking as if it must tear the sheets to

ribbons", or of the 'high-shouldered' Hubble's walking with his legs extraordinarily wide apart, so that the little Pip could see "some miles of open country between them", those of Sterne's are fine and delicate.

(d) *Media of communication:*

Locke regarded determinate language, or words having definite or distinct meaning, as the clear signs of ideas, and therefore, the medium of communication of thought. But in the Shandy world, language is not the only medium of communication. We have seen how gestures play a large part in conveying meaning, in Sterne. Moreover, sometimes language becomes inadequate even as a medium of communication. Words, we find, do not have a fixed meaning. A word may have different meanings for different persons—particularly, for those living in their own worlds of fancy. The meaning of words is conditioned by subjectivity. Sterne derives wonderful results from his drawing of characters by their ruling passion. Walter Shandy does not understand his brother Toby and Corporal Trim (who are kindred spirits and have hobby-horsical affinity) on most occasions; nor do Toby and Trim understand Walter. When Trim said he was bringing two 'mortars', Walter Shandy took the word in its medicinal sense (i.e., to mean a vessel for pounding drugs), whereas Trim had used it in the military sense, that is, to mean mock-weapons for his master's 'campaigns' on the bowling-green. Similarly, the 'bridge' Dr. Slop was making for the just-born Tristram's nose (which was broken by the scientific apparatus of Dr. Slop) is taken by Toby, absorbed in his 'campaigns', to mean the draw-bridge he had asked Trim to make (for the existing one had been broken, and Trim was actually making a new one at the time).

You must know, my uncle Toby mistook the bridge—as my father mistook the mortars. (T.S., III, 23; 213)

The comedy of this failure of inter-communication by words or determinate language runs throughout *Tristram Shandy*, chiefly between the Shandy brothers who are immersed in their respective hobby-horses of learning and arms. Trim, Toby's ever-faithful servant and invariable companion, is on his master's side; while they understand each other, they do not understand Walter Shandy. As Walter discourses on the virtues of grammatical learning, and on the use of auxiliary verbs in particular, Corporal Trim points out that the Danes, "who were on the left at the siege of Limerick, were all auxiliaries". (V, 42; 422). When Walter ends his scholastic discourse on health (the burden of which was that, the whole secret of health depends on the "due contention betwixt the radical heat and radical moisture

within us”), Toby, without understanding a word of his brother, asks Trim to relate what happened at the siege of Limerick, when, down with burning fever, they (Toby and Trim) reinforced themselves with hot wine and spices (their ‘radical heat’), which proved a fair match for the moisture caused by heavy rains (their ‘radical moisture’).

Upon my honour, added my uncle Toby, you might have heard the contention within our bodies, brother Shandy, twenty toises.

(*T.S.*, V, 8 ; 416)

Walter refers to the ‘regular succession of ideas of one sort or other’ following ‘each other in train’ in the human mind ; and Toby at once thinks of ‘a train of artillery’. Walter gives up in disgust.

This failure of Lockean communication in the Shandy world is interpreted by John Traugott in terms of a gap between the ideal and real worlds of Walter and Toby Shandy respectively. Traugott says that the novel (*T.S.*)

comes alive with the drama implicit in Locke’s failure to find a convincing relation between two worlds, real and ideal.

(John Traugott, *Tristram Shandy’s World*, 6)

But, as we have seen, the lack of inter-communication between the Shandy brothers is due to ‘hobby-horsical’, or temperamental, rather than metaphysical, causes. It is their absorption in their respective ruling passions of philosophy and science of war, not any divergence between the ideal and real worlds, that prevents their evoking the expected response from each other. Life’s inner laws do not always conform to reason, to rational calculations. And where this non-conformity results in amusement, in pure joy for the on-lookers, we have the real comedy of life.

RECENT EXPERIMENTAL DRAMA

MANJU DUTTA GUPTA

NONSENSE rhyme has been a favourite form of entertainment with readers. There are few who have not fallen under the spell of Edward Lear or Lewis Carroll. The following passage by Lear will illustrate the sort of thing meant. It is a limerick of which he has written a great number:

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared!—
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!"¹

Nonsense verses of this kind have been welcome because of their illogical and absurd elements. The new Absurd philosophy, on the other hand, looks upon the whole of life as absurd and meaningless. Such an attitude stems from the dismissal of God from the scheme of things by the existentialist thinkers. While men could once import meaning and value into life, relying upon God in spite of frustration, although these may destroy happiness and hope, now they have no such support.

In Sartre we read: 'Dostoevski once wrote "If God did not exist, everything would be permitted;" and that, for Existentialism, is the starting point. Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend on either within or outside himself.'²

The Absurd Theatre has been defined by Ionesco in an essay on Kafka: "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless."³

This in short is the Absurdist attitude and it seems to have influenced several leading thinkers of our time. We cannot perhaps find its ancestry in the element of nonsense which has always given pleasure and does so even now, for example, in Walt Disney's cartoons. The Absurd Philosophy, as it is called, is a new development and is a temporary embodiment of a sense of frustration people have felt. The causes for this are also to be sought in the increasing dominance of the machine in the world. We cannot quite revolt against the machine age as in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* where machines were destroyed because of their hard-

ful effect on man yet the remnants were preserved in a museum. But in *Erewhon* complete sanity did not apparently return and a certain amount of topsy-turvydom continued in the relation between man and society. For example, it was a very heinous offence to fall ill and to be in need of medical science.⁴

Of the various absurdities introduced in the plays written by Avant-Garde writers, one is the absence of communication between persons. We have the idea stated by Eliot in *The Waste Land* and Beckett in putting his characters into jars in his *Play* seems to emphasize this isolation, separateness and solipsism. Eliot's lines run as follows:

I have heard the key
Turn in the door once and turn once only
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
Only at nightfall, ethereal rumours
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus.⁵

Another passage in *The Hollow Men* by Eliot seems suggestive for our purpose:

Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass.

Harold Pinter in *The Collection* shows that an enquiry about a wife's behaviour with a stranger staying at the same hotel gives rise to the utmost confusion. Nothing is known, nothing is ascertained because each has a different tale or a different tale at a different time. In *The Lover* the husband plays a dual rôle of husband and lover and the wife that of a wife and a whore. The situations described do not arise from frustration but from a certain intractability which belongs to the human world. In Ionesco the absurdities take many different forms including marrying a motor-car and a girl with several noses. In his *The Chairs* the element of nonsense appears in an old man's hallucinatory experience. In his *Rhinoceros*, which is not a one-act play, Ionesco speaks of a disease called Rhinocerites which rages in epidemic proportion. It is possible that the rhinoceros is a symbol of separatism: its prevalence may be an excess which destroys society and turns men into wild animals. It is important to notice that one of the men who drank habitually, was friendly, humble and sociable, escaped infection. It is likely that the author is in some way expressing his strong discontent with the world of the twentieth century and its mechanical bias. Occasionally, one may feel that he intends to make the absurd element the basis of a comic view of life. The Absurd Theatre, as far as we can analyze it, gives a view of life which seems to be made from a distance by the author without a sense of self-involvement. What appears comical even

in suffering would have been tragical and the element of self-involvement been present. Hamm and Clov in *Endgame* and the cripple Nagg, the father, are described comically by Beckett. On such a view even the expression of pain may appear ridiculous. In *Cascando* by Beckett a voice describes how a man tumbles and tries to get up. It is again, a completely outside view. The movement thus described may sum up the difficult onward march of man struggling to achieve progress from a primitive beginning. In *Waiting for Godot* Pozzo and his servant Lucky are mysterious figures and certainly do not belong to our world. Lucky is kicked and is made to deliver a long speech in which philosophical concepts are fragmentarily and incoherently included. The idea may be pure nonsense or perhaps a serious comment as regards the nature of knowledge man acquires. It seems to suggest that knowledge of facts is not an accumulating process, increasing and embellishing our possession. In the sphere of knowledge one and two do not make three by the simple process of addition but cancel each other, becoming a zero, or attains to six times its value (twelve) by being transmuted into wisdom. The comparison with nonsense verse or prose and the Absurd position is perhaps permissible upto a point. Practically in every period of literature we can find some verses that are meant to amuse but are meaningless. We cannot however associate the Absurdist philosophy with the Greeks or the Elizabethans. It betrays a pathological state and the drama offers a kind of diagnosis, necessary to recovery. As against the amusement of the nonsense verse there is bewilderment in the Absurd Drama. While in the former escape from reason and routine is a relaxing experience, in the latter, there is instead, an embittered sense of frustration and despondency. In this attitude there is nothing to provide a firm stand-point for the study of human life and its purpose: at most it gives us a view of society governed by mechanical forces of industry and constantly under threat of destruction by nuclear war.

The title of one of Mr. Auden's latest poems, 'The Age of Anxiety' suggests one of the moods of the post-war world,—a mood often called 'angst',—a word borrowed from the Danish religious thinker of the early nineteenth century, Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard is the father of 'Existentialist' philosophy; this is not a philosophy which has had much technical influence on English literature, but some of its attitudes,—particularly the awareness of a general latent anxiety, not as the product of some particular pressure of events, but as intrinsic to the human state itself,—are shared by many English writers.

Samuel Beckett, an Irish dramatist, is the author of several plays characterized by an experimental technique. One of them is a short-play *Endgame*⁶ which discards many stage conventions. The term 'Endgame' belongs to the game of chess and what we see in *Endgame* written in prose is a threat of annihilation of the human species under

conditions not clearly indicated. There seems to be a suggestion that the world has arrived at the last stage of depopulation through war or some other unnamed large-scale disaster. What Beckett says in the play has on occasions a comic effect like a jest on the lips of a dying man. Indeed, the play is the account of a time apparently remote from our own; the embers of some great conflagration burn and consume the last remains of life. The aims of the author are not clear because allegory, symbolism and realism seem all to enter his technique. One can see, therefore, that Beckett's art is profoundly ambivalent, moving as it does between opposite poles, between the tragic and the comic, the one some times prevailing, some times the other. Such a complex attitude, involving the presence of contradictory elements, forms the basis of the writer's technique. The view he presents may be logically untenable but has yet a psychological truth worth exploring. One does not know whether Beckett speaks from supreme dissatisfaction, or from superior intuition. But his is an analysis, almost a surgical dissection, undertaken with a resolute will to reach the very core of meaning, to discover the ultimate secret. Such a programme is too impractical to produce material results but that it has been undertaken is an indication of an undaunted exploratory spirit, whose adventures excite imagination and direct it into new channels. We are sure that there is a hard core of meaning and that when the onion is peeled away, something will be left as the innermost centre of his vision, and this vision, as far as we can judge, has elements of beauty in spite of the general unconventionality of presentation. One will also notice a positive religion akin to the Christian ideal which often crops up and seems never far away from the acts and thoughts of the characters. The acceptance of Christianity can be through a mode of denial as exemplified by Baudelaire and it may be interesting to enquire how much the works of Beckett owe to the influence of that great nineteenth century French poet. Beckett, who wrote in French with more ease than in English is, evidently, close to the French tradition in some of its most living forms. Three critical studies have already been written on Beckett's works. The critics are Mr. Frederick J. Hoffman, Mr. Hugh Kenner and Mrs. Ruby Cohn. A *T.L.S.* article (December 21, 1962, 'The Core of the Onion') discusses some of these critical works and makes some observations which will, to a certain extent, prepare the reader for the problems which his plays and novels suggest.

Commenting on Proust in 1931 Beckett indicated the course he wanted to follow as a writer. Like Proust he rejected 'the literature that "describes", ... content to transcribe the surface, the facade, behind which the Idea is prisoner.' (See *T.L.S.* December 21, 1962). Among the four characters in *Endgame* Hamm cannot stand, Clov cannot sit and Nagg and Nell are kept shut up in a bin. The very

idea that humanity may arise again even after millions of years seems to be frightful as the following scene will show :

"Clov : (*anguished, scratching himself*). I have a flea!

Hamm : A flea! Are there still fleas?

Clov : On me there's one. (*Scratching*) Unless it's a crablouse.

Hamm : (*very perturbed*). But humanity might start from there all over again! Catch him, for the love of God!"⁷

What has happened is nowhere definitely stated. Hamm is blind and is constantly in need of a pain-killer. He is anxious to know about the view outside. There is something portentous about it, threatening and fearful in its aspect. There is no prophecy in clear terms but enough scope for the imagination to explore the details of horror which make even the prospects of a future life on this planet a source of distress. The four people are not capable of bringing up a new generation. Nell, who is the only woman, lives separately from Nagg; they are parents of Hamm who is already an old man. Nagg demands pap, a liquid infant food, and stays near Nell without being able to be within physical reach. There is no affection anywhere. Nagg is spoken to with contempt by Hamm. There is no friendship, no love and even the capacity for laughter has disappeared. To guffaw, to enjoy a cheery outbreak at another's cost, is also outside the purview of the few things that they can still do. What seems a little peculiar is, that hope of some kind has not left the world. There is a reference to green hills somewhere near. The persistent feeling is that there is no life, so at least Clov makes us imagine; "I am so bowed I only see my feet, if I open my eyes, and between my legs a little trail of black dust. I say to myself that the earth is extinguished, though I never saw it lit."⁸ Hamm is constantly telling Clov that he is to go and at the end he does go, fitted out for a journey. *Endgame* is concluded when Clov leaves behind the few wrecks of humanity, one of whom, Nell, dies before his departure.

This is a symbolical play. Mr. Kenner (*Samuel Beckett, John Calder*) discusses how the play must be interpreted. He makes a very ingenious analogical use of the arithmetic of the irrational numbers and also proposes a fairly reasonable view as regards the implications of the names given to the characters in *Endgame*. The play's interpretation is aided by stage representation. Even then the writer's idea will seem baffling. To resort to the arithmetic of the irrational numbers, as Mr. Kenner does, is to take most of us out of our depths. The full idea of what these mean will be understood by those with a scientific education. After the symbolical plays of Maeterlinck a great leap forward is taken by Beckett but his drama, valued as they rightly are by critics and theatre-goers, has not yet established a new theatrical tradition. Even an experiment may widen our mental horizon and

teach us to look further than the conventional modes permit us to do. From this point of view, if not from any other, we consider the play deserving of attention and careful study. The structure of the play is built upon a certain pattern of behaviour. To know the behaviour, therefore, is to have some insight into what the play is about.

The place where we see Clov, has a bare interior with grey light coming in from outside. He is stiff in his limbs, staggers as he tries to walk, and seems restless. He puts a large bloodstained handkerchief over the face of Hamm who is asleep. Climbing a ladder to see the surrounding country through a telescope he has a glimpse of multitudes in transports of joy. They are, in fact, the audience witnessing the play. He reports that the light is sinking and the waves of the sea have a leaden appearance. Mother Nell, about whom not much is known beside her name, is dead and unburied. Indeed, Clov cannot attend to this business on top of his other responsibilities. He has no sense of time; when he talks of yesterday he refers to "that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day."⁹ He also discovers that Nell's pulse has stopped. In this chaotic world he loves order, "It's my dream. A world where all would be silent and still and each thing in its last place, under the last dust."¹⁰ Hamm is the master of the house and orders Clov about using a whistle to summon him. He is blind and thinks that his misery is loftier than what anybody has ever endured. Clov tells him that Nature has ceased to exist. His parents Nagg and Nell are confined within a bin. The way Hamm behaves towards his father is often altogether heartless. He even takes him to task for having brought him into the world. The last long speech is by Hamm. It seems to convey a sense of mutual interdependence as the basis of society. At the moment Clov leaves, the reference to "endgame" seems to imply that life has no future before it.

Nagg is the father of Hamm and seems to be fond of Nell, his wife, even asking her to kiss him. But they are not near enough physically for the caress. They are without sight but can still hear. Nell's view is that nothing is funnier than unhappiness. There is a moment in Nagg's conversation with Nell which seems to suggest that meaning has disappeared from life. "What does that mean? (*Pause.*) That means nothing."¹¹ Nagg, a story-teller with a very well-developed sense of humour, loves to tell his wife about the tailor who did not complete a pair of stripped trousers for an Englishman who needed them for the New Year festivities. And the man told the tailor: "In six days, do you hear me, six days, God made the world. Yes Sir, no less Sir, the world! And you are not bloody well capable of making me a pair of trousers in three months!"¹² Nagg mimicks the tailor's scandalized voice and the words that follow as explanation. He has, evidently, a dramatic gift. Nagg, however, has no legs

but a pair of stumps and is fond of guzzling. His first words are "Me paps!" He wants the liquid baby food for his second childhood and is greeted by Hamm as his accursed progenitor. He recalls incidents which made him and Nell lose their shanks and remembers the freezing climate during a trip on Lake Como and their engagement on an April day. The account of the two aged people kept in a bin will seem to suggest that the world is completely changed, that it does not accept normal experience as having any meaning and even looks down upon those who have had any share in it. There is a momentary and uncertain glimpse of a boy which Hamm caught. This would be an indication that life has not perhaps completely disappeared. There are suggestions that here and there, there exist some forms of life, still undecayed, still promising to spread and fill the void created by the undescribed calamity. The reference to a sinking fire in *Endgame* could mean anything from a universal conflagration to a nuclear war. The general character of the scene depicted confirms this impression. Physical debility and a morbid feeling of annihilation and of complete hopelessness may easily be the outcome of some such circumstance. The writer has tried to look at things from within, without providing the external details which alone would have helped us to understand the situation more adequately. To omit details is to gain an effect of concentration and intensity. Physical details may complete a picture in a rough sort of way. They may also tend to divert the mind from the contemplation of the essential substance. The material completeness may involve a shift of emphasis from the important to the unimportant, from the effect to secondary causes and explanations. One wonders whether the play is a prophecy or a warning. Perhaps it may combine both. Artists are able to see farther than most people. If this is Beckett's vision of the future, there is justification for concentrating on the fewest details so that what emerges may the more clearly register the effect of desolation and misery. The words of the Bible, the dwindling machinery and the medicine that gives way—are all remnants of what had existed and would soon be lost for ever. In a world so nearly dehumanised, man's handiwork could not survive him.

Let us now consider *Play*¹³ by Samuel Beckett. The stage with three urns, each about one yard high and enclosing the dramatic personae is certainly a novelty which hardly anything in stage history could match. What are the urns, all made according to the author's specification, to do on the stage? Are they symbols of our inevitable apartness, do they suggest that human association is a fiction, that people do not actually know each other—with any truth or certainty? Perhaps, as the stage is a place of spectacle, the urns will make an exciting show, each one containing an isolated human being and looking almost as a part of

the urn itself. The situation is that of triangular love: wife, husband, mistress. The subject is as old as anything human can be. Yet why should its introduction be made in this fantastic manner? Any reasonable answer is difficult to find except perhaps the fact that the most sensational theme is as old as Adam, yet people will rig it up as a novelty by their ingenuity. The proceedings begin in an accusatory style. The wife forbids the husband to have further contact with the mistress. The man pretends ignorance and takes shelter in the usual subterfuges. This does not help matters. Finally, the two women meet and they get a little friendly, each declaring that the man need not come to her unless he has an inclination to do so. The women are numbered one and two and the man also is left without a name. This somewhat abstract approach gives the fable 'a universal quality. The man is not content with what the women can give. He moves from one to the other because there is no fulfilment for him. The women agree not to put pressure. The man says, 'A little dinghy, on the river, I resting on my oars, they lolling on air-cushions in the stern..... sheets. Drifting. Such fantasies.'¹⁴ From the man's words it may seem that the two women can give him the stability which one cannot. He has formed in his mind a kind of fantasy by which he is isolated in a dinghy with the two women, this being his vision of a self-contained world. Beckett does not by offering this picture enter a plea for bigamy. He seems, however, to suggest that man's nature is not moulded by law but has its own impulses shaping and directing it.

The play is perhaps a success on the stage but its literary quality is not evidently an attraction. Its movement is circular: it begins with the words which are practically the same as those spoken at the end. The husband's rôle is defensive: 'We were not long together' the wife's is an imperative, 'Give her up'; the mistress, on the other hand, can only recall the angry wife bursting into her presence one morning like a fury equipped with the power of the law. Thus, the words oscillate back and forth between two given ends and register no progress, indicating no solution. From this eternal tangle there is no escape, once a man is caught in it. Such seems the fable Beckett has designed. John Wain in a valuable article comments upon Samuel Beckett as a poetic dramatist. His views do not seem to be in accord with those of Eliot as stated in 'The Theodore Spencer Memorial Lecture' at Harvard University. John Wain writing twelve years later has the benefit of a body of new facts of which Eliot had no knowledge at the date. We quote Eliot so as to form a clear estimate the two discordant views: 'But in order to be poetic in prose, a dramatist has to be so consistently poetic that his scope is very limited..... The poetic prose dramatist who has not this advantage, has to

be too poetic.¹⁵ We shall next quote John Wain whose words convince us that Eliot was not very clear-sighted in treating the poetic drama in prose as more or less unpractical because of the limitations under which it labours: 'Beckett's achievement was twofold: first, he wrote a "poetic" drama that broke away from verse; *Waiting for Godot* was undeniably poetic in its use of language and its atmosphere, while breaking with the tired and wilting tradition of "verse drama". By comparison with the plays of, say, Christopher Fry, *Godot* was genuinely poetic, and its success made possible a whole new idiom of poetic prose in the theatre, quickly exploited by Harold Pinter and others.'¹⁶

John Wain points out that drama has moved between the two poles of ritual and realism. In the nineteenth century and the twentieth realism went all the way it could. But cinema and television can do the job better. Drama is thus returning to ritual to gain a new strength. It is re-establishing its connexion with its primal source. The use of mask in Yeats, of soliloquy in Pinter, and other modes practised by new dramatists like Arnold Wesker, Shelagh Delaney, John Arden, Bernard Kops and Doris Lessing are among the devices by which the trend to naturalism is checked in favour of a new anti-realistic element. John Wain's examination of the position and prospects of the theatre since the forties strikes a note of optimism: 'No one doubts that the aims and methods of British playwrights have altered vastly in the last twenty years, and my own view is that these changes have been entirely for the better. The younger dramatists who have started up in such profusion since 1950 may be no better, talent for talent, than their predecessors; but the theatre they write for is in a healthier state. It has managed to rid itself of some venerable and hampering illusions. The chief, and most harmful, of these illusions was that the stage-play could be, or should be, or ever had been, of a naturalistic form. The new theatre has rediscovered its own essential nature, half-way between discussion and ritual.'¹⁷

Harold Pinter is more concerned with the form of drama than with its meaning. He confesses, 'I start off with people who come into a particular situation. I certainly don't write from any kind of abstract idea. And I wouldn't know a symbol if I saw one.' ('Writing for Myself', an interview, *Twentieth Century*, February, 1961, p. 174). Pinter's interview with Tynan provides an important though brief introduction to the nature of the dramatic art he practises: 'I think it is impossible—and certainly for me to start writing a play from any kind of abstract idea..... I start writing a play from an image of a situation and a couple of characters involved, and these people always remain for me quite real; if they were not, the play could not be written.'¹⁸ Another statement, also made at the same interview, draws attention to an element in his work, which is often mentioned as its characteris-

tic; 'I feel... that instead of any inability to communicate there is a deliberate evasion of communication. Communication itself between people is so frightening that rather than do that there is continual cross-talk, a continual talking about other things, rather than what is at the root of their relationship.'¹⁹ Further we come across quite frequently what Esslin characterizes as 'nonsensical cross-examination.'²⁰

Pinter's first play, *The Room*, was written in 1957 in which year he also wrote *The Dumb Waiter* and *The Birthday Party*. He has had much success as a writer for the theatre and the television, one of the most outstanding of his works being *The Caretaker* which received the Evening Standard Drama Award for the best play of 1960. Harold Pinter has been praised by John Russell Taylor in *Anger and After* as a dramatist of great promise. He observes: '... his works are the true poetic drama of our time'.²¹ But Pinter does not use the verse medium. *The Collection* and *The Lover* are two plays in prose, both produced in 1961 and seem to have as their main themes, menace and lack of communication. Menace may be an offshoot of angst, a word borrowed from the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard, founder of the 'Existentialist' Philosophy.²² Angst seems to be a part of human consciousness owing little or nothing to contemporary pressure of events.

Pinter's *The Collection*²³ was first presented as a television play in 1961 and was produced on the stage a year later. The form in which it is published reveals the intention to televise the scenes. Several views represent simultaneously two different flats where we can see all the four characters involved in the action.—Harry, James, Stella and Bill. The note of menace is struck in the form of a telephone call late at night,—a voice asking for Bill, then asleep and in bed. Harry wants to know the caller's name, who does not, however, give it. Next day the ring comes again. Bill hurries away from home to avoid meeting the man who spoke at the other end of the line. He promises to come in a minute and does so to find that Bill is away. James, for that is his name, calls at the house a second time. Bill is now at home and tries to be as rude as possible to the visitor: 'You can't just barge into someone's house like this, you know. What do you want?'²⁴ He even threatens to call in the police. Quite indifferent to this rudeness James hunts for olives and asks: 'You mean to say you don't keep olives for your guests?'²⁵ Bill replies sarcastically, 'You're not my guest, you're an intruder.'²⁶ James charges Bill of booking a room, No. 142, at Westbury Hotel, Leeds, but sleeping in 165 with his wife. He also says that Bill had a bath and came into her room, towelled like a Roman, accusing him of having treated his wife like a whore. Bill first denies having met her, later admits the

meeting and a few inoffensive kisses. The statement is afterwards altered to a chance encounter in the lounge and a discussion of what the pair would do if they proceed by themselves into the bedroom. Finally, everything seems to be a kind of dream and illusion without any basis in fact. The statement that their intimacies do not go beyond a casual meeting in the lounge may, after all, be the whole story. The wife is asked to confirm the account but she looks at her husband neither confirming nor denying. Thus the play comes to an end.

In examining the point of view of Harold Pinter we can recognize the two elements on which our attention is focussed. Perhaps the features emphasized are also the features of the larger life of society. The sense of an undefined danger has been haunting the western imagination. The philosophical interest over a longer period of time has made the problem of communication all-important from the point of view of poets and the public. In Pinter the scope of the problem acquires new dimensions; communication between characters in a play or story assumes the nature of a metaphysical problem but as the theme develops, the problem as suggested in Pinter's play does not seem to be so much one of communication as of an uncertainty about the grounds on which a certain allegation is made. The characters Stella and Bill in the given circumstances have no particular reason to be frank and open to James. It is not suggested that they are intentionally secretive and are trying to form an unlawful alliance behind the back of the husband. But there is almost an unconscious desire to withhold the facts, to whittle them down so as to give as little offence as possible. The question of communication cannot be here treated as all-important, for a definite motive operating may even more effectively explain the different versions about the same situation. The dialogue is clear and swift; its power comes from being in accord with each and every occasion.²⁷ In other words, the idea of economy is carried as far as it can go. The end may appear satisfactory, the momentary disturbance is forgiven and forgotten when James tells Bill: 'Look ... I really think I ought to apologize for this silly story my wife made up. The fault is really all hers, and mine, for believing her.'²³ But the alleged act of adultery is left unproved. Thus a more or less satisfactory *finale* is reached and we perceive that what happened is actually nobody's fault but a fault of communication. When a play is written to put across such a view, it is not always that we are able to see it, and even if we do, we do so, feeling that there are other equally valid explanations and that there is no particular case for holding only one of them as the single explanation possible in the given situation. As a television piece the alternation of scenes or their simultaneous presentation contributes considerably to the liveliness of effect. The word "Collection" may mean some material for an artistic

work which is yet to be produced. The play starts with a sense of something unresolved and ends with the same feeling though the cause changes. The first feeling is that of menace, something uncomprehended and basically dangerous, a threat which may materialize any moment. The telephone call at an unearthly hour, visitors calling and leaving in an unexplained manner constitute this element of menace. The second element is lack of communication,—the husband, the wife and the alleged lover try to ascertain what exactly had taken place. Several versions emerge; the worst is adultery and the least incriminating is merely a preliminary meeting, though possibly with a chance of all sorts of development. The husband is eager to accept his wife's innocence as established yet the wife looks speechlessly on without allaying the troubles which had upset the poor man. There seems to be a misunderstanding, although, apparently, no way of clearing it up. Each man and each woman are cut off and are confined to their separate prison cells without being able to communicate,—the real and the fictitious make up the total fabric of life. To disentangle the two may be desired but the thing seems to be out of reach. The three rooms make up the scene. At the end they appear simultaneously in a half faded light. The idea may be to offer a glimpse of all the persons of the drama by way of a farewell sight to remember and ponder over.

In *The Lover*, included in the same volume there is also a similar shadow cast over the events, and a sense of insecurity following as a result. *The Lover* has two characters, Sarah and Richard, who play double rôles, wife-mistress, husband-lover. Richard's last words to his wife "You lovely whore" spoken in his double rôle apparently establish the case for lack of communication. The technical modes representing the double rôle introduce changes in dramatic presentation, not particularly easy to follow, and even if intelligible, they do not seem to give a satisfactory idea why double rôles are preferred to single ones and what dramatic advantage is gained thereby. The two plays are, however, full of brisk movement and the dialogues move swiftly, naturally and with a sprightly gift of wit and humour without blazing into pyrotechnics of falling below a certain quality of brilliance. The plays are alive, and yet alive in a way which suggests problems with an aesthetic or philosophical basis. From the above analysis we can see that the atmosphere of the present age fairly hums with experiments. Although this is an indication of a desire to achieve an original approach to different questions and provide a study of various human impulses, there is also the possibility that changes of this kind may indicate only a passing fashion, ephemeral in character, without being an expression of anything deep-seated in human nature or essential to the art by which it is expressed. Pinter is subtle; but the question is whether this subtlety aids the understanding of human nature. Perhaps the technique is adapted to the tastes of

sophisticated society, ready to respond to new modes of subtlety for the purpose of its entertainment.

*A Slight Ache*²⁹ by Pinter has only three characters,—Flora, Edward her husband and a match-seller. The time is a day in summer and the place is the home of the couple (Flora and Edward). The match-seller constitutes the element of menace. He is continually waiting outside the gate with damp matches to sell. Edward invites him to come inside and Flora offers lunch. But the match-seller does not respond even by a single word. Edward tells him many things and Flora speaks with him alone, identifying him as the poacher who had once raped her. Later as a Justice of Peace she had this poacher hauled up before the bench. 'He was there for poaching. That's how I know he was a poacher ... I acquitted him, letting him off with a caution.'³⁰ The incident of the rape is associated with a horse ride she undertook before marriage when she went out by herself on a canter. The whole business may well be a figment of the imagination rather than a fact. As she spoke to the stranger in the parlour her mood grew melting; the silent man before her grew young. The husband, however, regarded the man as mysterious and a source of potential danger. His "slight ache" in the eye probably means some kind of distorted vision. What is generally thought to be the lack of communication, the author preferring instead "an evasion of communication", the nonsensical cross-examination is also present in the play. Pinter's dialogue is natural rather than witty,—he avoids the intellectual as an unsuitable single pillar to support his rather curious vision and depends instead on a poetic approach. As a piece of writing his excellence is indisputable. The following comment by Esslin is a kind of defence but one which may not appeal to every taste: "Most real conversation, after all, is incoherent, illogical, ungrammatical, and elliptical. By transcribing reality with ruthless accuracy, the dramatist arrives at the disintegrating language of the Absurd. It is the strictly logical dialogue of the rationally constructed play that is unrealistic and highly stylized."³¹ The objection to the statement is that we have all of us the feeling that when we speak we do try to speak more or less rationally.

*The Dumb Waiter*³²—The characters in the play are Ben and Gus and the scene is a basement room in Birmingham and the time is the present. The two men are, evidently, employed as agents to murder people not wanted by their employers. They wait for instruction while a shaft comes down and goes up carrying food. The talk is incoherent but throughout there is a sense of impending danger. The enquiries about time made through the speaking tube indicate that the Zero hour has come and evidently Ben is required to kill Gus. "Gus goes out to the lavatory and while he is gone, Ben receives an order over the speaking-tube which turns out to be that he must kill Gus. They confront each

other as the curtain slowly falls.”³³ The play has the characteristics we associate with Pinter’s technique: suspense, a lack of understanding about what people mean, and a type of topsy-turvydomin speech. But out of all that is said and done the lurid light of a somewhat fearful prospect shines menacingly. The power and the literary gifts of Pinter have earned him just esteem but one wonders whether his diagnosis of the modern situation is really in accord with experience. But if it fails the criterion of realism, which evidently it does, there is for it vindication on the plane of symbolism and allegory.

Eugene Ionesco—Apart from experiments in technique as illustrated by the works of Beckett and Pinter, the subject-matter also registers important changes among recent writers. There is more psychology of the abnormal kind along with resort to subtle feelings and despondencies. What we now notice in an increasing measure is the exploration of the unconscious. Hence the frequency with which fantasies are found as an element in drama and novel. In Ionesco’s plays illusion and actuality are fused together in a kind of fantasy. He writes explaining his point of view: “Creation ... is life, it is liberty, it can even be counter to the conscious desires (these are seldom fundamental desires) and to the prejudices of the creator.”³⁴ Eugene Ionesco’s experiments in drama are based upon his knowledge of two fundamental states of consciousness, “an awareness of evanescence and of solidity, of emptiness and of too much presence, of the unreal transparency of the world and its opacity, of light and of thick darkness.”³⁵ According to Donald Watson who writes a retrospect for the second volume of the plays, they represent the following styles: “banality, exaggeration, (to include repetition and inconsequence), illogicality, dislocation and elevation.”³⁶ As regards dislocation of language we notice that he either invents words or telescopes or distorts them, e.g., ‘chronometrable’, ‘eulogue’, ‘aristocroot’, ‘abracchante’, ‘mononster’ etc.

We can briefly examine one of Ionesco’s short plays, “The New Tenant”³⁷ so as to gain some access to his ideas and technique. “The New Tenant” seems to be a characteristic illustration of what Ionesco describes as “an awareness of evanescence and of solidity” by way of a key to the interpretation of the plays. The new tenant arrives to take possession and has the usual exchanges with the caretaker. Although provoked by her, he does not show any acerbity of temper. The furniture comes pouring in, covers the room from floor to ceiling, also the stairs and the road outside, and finally even the walls themselves seem to make passage for its entry. This is almost a surrealist technique in which the actual merges into fantasy. The new tenant turns off the lights in order to lie in his chair quietly and enjoy the accumulations by which he is surrounded. The picture of his grand parents looks down upon him from a high place on the wall. What

are we to make of the gaze they cast upon him? Perhaps they represent the past, the tradition nearly lost, being a contrast to the entirely meaningless quest for possession to which the modern man may easily succumb. But other interpretations may also be possible. The effect of the scene on the stage may be that of an *impasse* symbolizing the present state of the world, steadily forcing us into a position from which there is no escape. Ionesco will rank as dramatist of the inner world of the mind. His accounts of actual things are often casual, for he uses these to introduce mental states of two kinds mentioned above. The following comment may offer an insight into the fact: "In the theatre the emergence of the Ionesco cult of the Absurd refuses to admit order or meaning anywhere into drama. But the area of human experience with which such art deals has been whittled down and down. Once the main concern of the writer was with Man and God, or man and his universe; then it shrank further to the individual man and his society. Now the main area of concern and conflict is within the individual man." ('After the Tranquillized Fifties', by C. B. Cox and A. R. Jones, *The Critical Quarterly*, Summer 1964, Vol. 6, No. 2 p. 119). Ionesco's contemporaneity in art is undeniable. His plays do not provide a coherent picture but the elements which keep on appearing again and again, reveal the troubles and preoccupations of the modern mind. This would be seen very clearly from an examination of a three-act play, "Rhinoceros". The characters become transformed into rhinoceroses. The cause is speculatively analyzed in the play itself as a predisposition in favour of nature and rural life. This view is abandoned when the trouble rages through the whole city. It is now described as a new kind of plague, as rhinocerites. The rhinoceroses did not do any harm beyond trampling down a cat and destroying a rather ramshackle staircase in trying to climb it. Only one man escapes; he is a drunkard but humble and considerate by nature. Are we to suppose that human sensibility is being lost through increasing mechanization of life; that the only resistant to this is inebriation and its consequent tendency to self-forgetfulness, and the cultivation of a spirit of humility? Perhaps such simple answers lead us nowhere in trying to get at the author's purpose. What is evident is the novelty of the reaction in the plays to the business of living in the modern world. As contemporaries of the playwright we can enter into his spirit without being fully able to analyze it. The Absurd position is a recurring element in Ionesco.

In one play "Jacques or Obedience"³⁸ a bride is preferred because she has three noses to another who has only two! Does this mean that human efficiency is judged in terms of a machine; that the more of a thing like a double or triple engine is a recommendation and proof of worth also in a human being?

In "The Motor Show"³⁹ a young man chooses a car as his bride and borrows a nose which he returns. In "Foursome"⁴⁰ three young-men propose to own the same girl and in the scramble which ensues she loses her hands and legs. These examples well indicate the absurdities in the Ionesco play.

The writer himself explains his position in "Improvisation."⁴¹ As a background to his drama one should remember an incident he had once witnessed in a village street. This was a shepherd embracing a chameleon. The latter term might have been properly glossed so that the picture could grow definite in our minds. He seems to accept this as a kind of metaphor to describe his relation to the theatre. He is the shepherd he says, and the theatre is the chameleon. In other words, he realizes that the vitality of the theatre cannot be manifested within the four corners of an academic theory. It is constantly changing and the dramatist works in the full knowledge of this continually-changing aspect of his beloved whom he wishes to serve. Ionesco mentions Brecht and other dramatists, including those of ancient Greece. From his own contemporaries he seems a little different but he does not indicate how he is related in his own estimation to Shakespeare and the classics. On the subject of his Absurd philosophy his comments are valuable. Psychoanalytical writers present their material after treating its rawness out of existence. He insists on preserving the rawness without any change for the sake of the art he practises. He thus seems to be close to the surrealists in his attitude and the absurdities are, therefore, capable of interpretation in terms of the Freudian subconsciousness.

In "Victims of Duty"⁴², described as a pseudo-drama, Madeleine Choubert discusses drama from the earliest times to the present. The husband holds that dramas have always been realistic and that there has always been a detective about.⁴³ Unlike the remarks quoted earlier, which suggest the theatre as a medium never the same for more than once, here we have the idea of a kind of a cast-iron frame, rigid and not susceptible of change. But it is possible that in making this comment the idea of a different type of drama seems to have been present in the speaker's mind. For what he calls detective drama he likens to a mode of naturalism.⁴⁴ His own practice as a dramatist thus introduces a completely new type of experience.

In "The Lesson"⁴⁵ an old professor seems to hypnotise a little girl into consenting to the sexual act. The pupils are his victims in the sense that they die and are buried comically because it seems that he will have no further contact with them. The professor is an experienced hand and diabolically induces a feeling of helpless inferiority, preceding an abject surrender for which this seems a preparation.⁴⁶

"The Chairs"⁴⁷ is a fantasy of a nonagenarian married couple. The

old man was a Quartermaster-General with a nostalgia for childhood and a sense of frustration because he could not rise in life higher than he did. An evening is celebrated as an occasion of a great gathering to which even the Emperor is supposed to come. No one is visible to the audience yet the flow of talk goes on and the old man declares that he has a message which an orator appointed by him will deliver. The orator arrives very late and writes something on the blackboard which nobody understands. The couple have already jumped out of the window in a suicide mania.⁴⁸ Here again a suppressed sense of personal failure manifests itself as a demand for fulfilment with all the paraphernalia required for such a purpose. After fulfilment there is nothing else to live for. The old man constantly howling for his 'mummy' seems to illustrate a psychological fact discovered in this century that one takes refuge so to speak in childhood, or the mother's womb⁴⁹ in certain circumstances. As the theatre is an Absurd theatre we must not look for coherence in the pattern and speak for the identification of the audience, the Emperor and the orator. They seem to be necessary to the fulfilment desired and it may be wrong to see in them any symbolism other than what the occasion imposes.

"Maid to marry"⁵⁰ is a curious play,—the lady's daughter is introduced as a man *about thirty years old, robust and virile, with a bushy black moustache*, (p. 158 Vol. 3) and her mother introduces her as a woman aged ninety-three explaining: "She owes us eighty years, so that makes her only thirteen." There is discussion about nationalities, about the French, the English and the Corsican, and also about progress, mechanization, etc. The attitude to these questions will seem frivolous in view of their grave importance. The attempt to concede some value to them seems a mode of debunking. This attitude is characteristic of Ionesco whom we never see launching upon a Shavian discussion or argument with a view to propaganda.

What Ionesco offers is not facts but a semblance of facts and out of these he produces feelings and emotions which seem perfectly normal. While the former is difficult to understand, for they are mostly wildly fantastic in character, the latter appear to be quite genuine stuff and although we cannot connect the two yet one seems well related to the other by reason of a disordered psychology, being the expression of neurosis from which humanity in our day seems especially to suffer. The obscurities, the confusions, the excitement, the solitude, the sexual urge and its disappointment, the prevailing sense of frustration and the desire to pass on to something for the benefit of futurity, all belong to our world and indicate what we can see as a strong human impulse even in the midst of mechanization encroaching so dangerously upon human relations. If we are so fond of machines why should we not

beget machines—marry them and live with them? The preferences are dictated not by aesthetic standards but by a purely numerical one. Choice is bestowed upon one having more of the same thing than another, three noses are preferred to two. Is there an implied satire on modern civilization? Are not our desires and our modes of life relentlessly exposed and laughed at by this fable of our modern life? Or do we see in Ionesco's attitude a reflection of Picasso's policy in art where ethics and moral issues demand more attention than the 'beautiful harmonies'? "My landscapes", he writes, "are exactly like my nudes and my still lifes; but with faces people see the nose is crooked, whereas nothing shocks them about a bridge. But I drew this 'crooked nose' on purpose. I did what was necessary to force people to see a nose. Later on they saw—or they will see—that the nose isn't crooked at all. What I had to do was to stop them from going on seeing only 'beautiful harmonies' or 'exquisite colour'."⁵¹

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14. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
15. "Poetry and Drama", *Selected Prose* (Penguin Books 1953) p. 74.
16. John Wain, "The Conflict of Forms in Contemporary English Literature", *The Critical Quarterly*, Spring, 1962, p. 16.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
18. Martin Esslin's *The Theatre of the Absurd* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1962), p. 211.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
21. John Russell Taylor's *Anger and After* (Penguin Books, 1962), p. 315.
22. See G. S. Fraser: *The Modern Writer and His World*. (Rupa & Co., 1961), p. 9.

23. Harold Pinter's *The Collection* and *The Lover* (London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1963).
24. Ibid., p. 16.
25. Ibid., p. 17.
26. Ibid.
27. Martin Esslin comments on this fact: "Harold Pinter, whose uncanny accuracy in the reproduction of real conversation among English people has earned him the reputation of having a tape-recorder built into his memory, reveals that the bulk of everyday conversation is largely devoid of logic and sense, is in fact nonsensical." (*Absurd Drama*, Penguin Plays, 1965), p. 14.
28. Harold Pinter's *The Collection* and *The Lover* (London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1963) p. 44.
29. Harold Pinter's *A Slight Ache* (Samuel French, London, 1961).
30. Ibid., p. 20.
31. Martin Esslin's *The Theatre of the Absurd*, p. 205.
32. Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* (Samuel French, London, 1960).
33. John Russell Taylor's *Anger and After* (Penguin Books, 1963), p. 291.
34. "Reality in Depth", *Encore V*, 1958, 10.
35. *Plays* Vol. I (John Calder, London, Paper Back) p. vii.
36. *Plays* Vol. 2, p. viii.
37. Ionesco's "The New Tenant" *Plays* Vol. II (John Calder, London, 1958).
38. Ionesco's "Jacques or Obedience", *Plays* Vol. I (John Calder, London, 1958).
39. Ionesco's "The Motor Show", *Plays* Vol. V (John Calder, London, 1963).
40. Ionesco's "Foursome", *Plays* Vol. V (John Calder, London, 1963).
41. Ionesco's "Improvisation", *Plays* Vol. III (John Calder, London, 1960).
42. Ionesco's "Victims of Duty", *Plays* Vol. II (John Calder, London, 1958).
43. Ibid., p. 269.
44. Ibid., p. 270.
45. Ionesco's "The Lesson", *Plays* Vol. I (John Calder, London, 1958).
46. Ionesco may perhaps owe to De Sade's *Justine* some idea about the old professor, in his "The Lesson". Doctor Rodin in *Justine* (Ch. 8) used to have a number of students under his care. One of them Julie, is lashed by him with a leather whip to satisfy his sadistic impulse. *Justine* (London, Neville Spearman, 1964) pp. 65-66.
47. Ionesco's "The Chairs", *Plays* Vol. I (John Calder, London, 1958).
48. Albert Camus while analysing the absurd sensibility finds the suicide mania a truly philosophical problem. He says: "An act like this is prepared within the silence of the heart, as is a great work of art. The worm is in the man's heart.... In a sense, and as in melodrama, killing yourself amounts to confessing. It is confessing that life is too much for you or that you do not understand it." *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Translated from the French by Justin O'Brien (Hamish Hamilton, London, Second edition 1960), p. 12.
49. Cf. George Orwell's "Inside the Whale", *England your England* (London, Secker & Warburg, London, 1953), p. 133. "... the fact is that being inside a whale is a very comfortable, cosy, homelike thought. The historical Jonah, if he can be so called, was glad enough to escape, but in imagination, in day-dream, countless people have envied him. The whale's belly is simply a womb big enough for an adult. There you are, in the dark, cushioned space that exactly fits you, with yards of blubber between yourself and reality, able to keep up an attitude of the completest indifference, no matter what happens."
50. Ionesco's "Maid to Marry", *Plays* Vol. III (John Calder, London, 1960).

• In this reference it may be pointed that some critics are of opinion that a 'strong didactic impulse' is present in the works of Ionesco. The following note which appeared in the T.L.S. for April 1, 1965 seems suggestive on the point we are discussing: "It is the hazard of writers who depend on dreams and private obsessions that their careers may be no longer than a course of analysis: creation becomes a form of therapy, with the inescapable consequence that success in psychological terms also brings artistic death.... The fact that the public are impressed by pundits and clear messages in no way compensates for the imaginative loss involved." T. L. S. April 1, 1965, *Player Into Pundit*, Eugene Ionesco: Notes and Counter-Notes. Translated by Donald Watson. 279 pp. Calder. 35s.

51. Ronald Gray's *Brecht* (Oliver And Boyd, Edinburgh and London, 1961), p. 82.

WILLIAM THOMPSON—THE SPENSERIAN

DILIP KUMAR SEN

WILLIAM THOMPSON who wrote in 1736 two poems in the Spenserian stanza has left behind him some poems and a few scraps of information about himself. Little is known of him except that he was a Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford; that he held a living in Oxfordshire; and that he edited and annotated Joseph Hall and William Browne. His first Spenserian imitation, *An Epithalamium on the Royal Nuptials, in May 1736*, consists of a series of twenty-five Spenserian stanzas to commemorate the marriage of Prince Frederick with Augusta. Thompson borrows here freely but with artistic skill from Spenser's description of the marriage of the Thames and the Medway, and draws also from *Epithalamion*, *The Shepheardes Calender* and *The Faerie Queene*. "Albion's worthy heir" and his bride are introduced in the first stanza. Then a band of nymphs await the royal pair—

The wanton Nays, Doris' daughters all,
Range in a ring : Pherusa, blooming fair,
Cymodoce dove-ey'd, with Florimal
Sweet smelling flowrets deck'd their long green hair,
And Erato, to Love, to Venus dear,
Galene drest in smiles and lily-white,
And Phao with her snowy bosom bare.

This appears to have been modelled on the following description in Canto, *F.Q.*, IV. 11 sts. 48, 49:—

And after these the Sea Nymphs marched all,
All goodly damzels, deckt with long greene hare,

* * * *

The gray eyde Doris :

* * * *

Fairest Pherusa, Phao lilly white,
Wondred Agaue, Poris and Ncsaea,
With Erato that doth in love delite
Cymodoce, and stout Autonoe

* *
* *

There is also another Spenserian echo. The 'pointed gondelay' of Thompson's epithalamy may have been suggested by the one seen by Spenser's Cymochles (*F.Q.* II 6. 7).

Later the poet describes the charming bride, blushing making her way to her love—

She comes, (oh, blessed day!)
 She comes by all the Loves and Graces dress'd,
 In proud humility.

After a while he becomes ecstatic—

So faire she lookes, nay fairer, could it be ;
 Did never mortal man such charms behold
 In bower or hall. Spring waits upon her eye ;
 Lo! Flora has her richest stores out-rolled
 Of variable flowers and booming gold.

These lines have the insistent ring of lines, like the following from *Epithalamion* :—

Tell me ye merchants daughters did ye see,
 So fayre a creature in your Towne before,
 So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,
 Adorn'd with beautyes grace and Vertues store.

Again, Eusebia, "immaculate and sweet as Sharon-rose," who represents the Protestant Church and has upon "her breast a bloody Cross" is perhaps a feminine counterpart of the gentle knight, "pricking on the plain". The close of the poem borrows a name from *The Shepheardes Calender* :

Thee fits not, Thomalin, a simple swain,
 Digh deeds to sing, but gentle roundelays :

Thompson wrote in 1736, another Spenserian poem. This is called the *Nativity*. Here in twenty Spenserian stanzas assuming the name of Thomalin, he sings of the birth of Christ. He sees in imagination the infant Jesus at his mother's breast.

Nearby stands Mercy—

Her looks were love, soft-streaming from the throne
 Of grace, and sweetly melted on the boy ;
 Her tongue drop'd honey, which would never cloy.

Thompson's Mercy, has some interesting points of resemblance with Spenser's "Mercie".

There are other passages which seem to echo Spenser's House of Holiness—The "joyous fellowship" that comes to greet the newborn child is led by Faith, who like Speranza has

... her mantle dipt in blue
 Steady her ken and gaining on the skies.

Humility, in 'homely weeds array'd' is perhaps suggested by Humilita (*F.Q.* 1. 10.5)

In the closing stanza, Thompson pays a tribute to Pope and offers a shy plea for his use of "antique" words :—

Whilom these sceres the tuneful Twick'nam swain,
 With Essay's heavenly pencil taught to glow :
 Then cease, O cease, the antiquated strain.

This love for Pope is suggestive and throws some interesting light on Thompson's curious personality. On the one hand he is the author of *vers de société* and sportive neo-classic lyrics, the imitator of Anacreon, the ardent champion of Pope. On the other hand, he is a student of the Elizabethans, thoroughly saturated with Spenser, and intimately acquainted with the works of Phineas Fletcher, Fairfax, Donne, Drayton and others.

Apparently Thompson, like many other Augustans, felt no clash in his tastes. Pope's *Pastorals* throws him into a rapture and he exclaims:—

O listen to Alexis' tender plaint!

How gently rural! without coarseness plain¹

Elsewhere he says lovingly of Pope as follows:—

O, skilled thy every reader's breast to warm,

To lull with harmony, with sense to charm,

To call the glowing soul into the ear.

(And now we live, and now we die to hear.)

* * *

O Pope! the sweetest of the tuneful race.²

Again he freely admits:—

To Colin [Spenser] next he [Pope] taught my youth to sing

The king of Shepherds he, of poets he the King.³

For Spenser also Thompson had sincere admiration and was evidently thrilled by his spell. "The date of our English poetry may with justice begin with Spenser. It is true Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate were masters of uncommon beauties, considering the age they lived in, and have described the humours, passions etc. with great discernment. Yet none of them seems to have been half so well acquainted with the very life and being of poetry, invention, painting and design as Spenser."⁴ Elsewhere he exclaims with evident pride that he regards Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton as the great triumvirate in English poetry.⁵ In his *Garden Inscriptions* he invokes the spirit of Spenser:—

Come, Spenser's awful genius, come along,

Mix with the music of the aerial throng.

Oh! breathe a pensive stillness through my breast,

While balmy breezes pant the leaves among

And sweetly soothe my passions into rest.⁶

Praising *The Shepherdes Calender* he writes—

Yet boast not, thou of Greece, nor thou of Rome,

My sweeter Colin Clout outpipes both at home.⁷

In his two early Spenserian imitations Thompson like most of the other contemporary imitators uses many archaisms. But one thing should be noted. He prefers to write in the regular Spenserian stanza and discards the more popular modification of it by Prior. In fact,

after Samuel Croxall, Thompson is the only poet who wrote in the Spenserian stanza in the history of the Spenserian imitations of the eighteenth century in England. His handling of the stanza is not always artistic but he shows enough awareness of Spenserian luxury and tunefulness and there were few men in 1736 who could have written the last line of the following four:—

For there he burns, for thee he sighs and prays,

Pours out his soul to thee, nor rest can know,

But dreams of thee long, livelong nights and days,

By beauty led through all Love's rosy-thorny ways.⁸

It is important to note that, while there is a free use of supposedly archaic words with usual list of *certes*, *perdie*, *sikerly*, *hight*, as well as others less common, such as *belgards* (beautiful looks), *bonni bels* (beautiful virgins), there is no abuse of the practice. Not a little of the genuine spirit of Spenser's poetry, with its love of nature and out door life, has been caught and reproduced without any lavish recourse to an artificial and conventional diction.

The Hymn to May, written in 1746, is by all counts, the best Spenserian imitation of Thompson. He appended to it a lengthy preface where he says, "As Spencer is the most descriptive and florid of all our English writers, I attempted to imitate his manner in (this) vernal poem. I have been very sparing of the antiquated words, which are too frequent in most of the imitations of this author..... Shakespeare is the poet of nature in adapting the affections and passions to his characters, and Spenser in describing her delightful scenes and rural beauties. His lines are most musically sweet and his descriptions, most delicately abundant, even to a wantonness of painting; but still it is the music and painting of nature. We find no ambitious ornaments or epigrammatical turns in his writings, but a beautiful simplicity which pleases far above the glitter of pointed wit. I endeavoured to avoid the affectation of the one, without any hopes of attaining the graces of the other kind of writing."

The romanticism of Thompson comes out clearly in this excerpt from his preface. His praise of the Spenserian stanza appears to be sincere and his reference to the 'glitter of pointed wit' may be adduced as an evidence of his dislike for the heroic couplet. Another remarkable thing is that he too notices in Spenser a "beautiful simplicity" but does not banter at this simplicity! Here he parts company with other contemporary Spenserian imitators. Shenstone who wrote his *Schoolmistress* in 1737 started by poking fun at this simplicity of Spenser, but Thompson does not show any signs of contemporary attitude to Spenser in his preface.

Another interesting feature of this preface is Thompson's argument for adopting the stanza of Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island*:

"I hope", he says, "I have no apology to make for describing the beauties, the pleasures and the loves of the season in too tender or too florid a manner. The nature of the subject required a luxuriousness of versification, and a softness of sentiment," and adds, "As I professed myself in this canto to take Spenser for my model I chose the stanza which I think adds both a sweetness and solemnity at the same time to subjects of this rural and flowery nature..... I followed Fletcher's manner in his *Purple Island*..... The Alexandrine line, I think, is peculiarly graceful at the end, and is an improvement on Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. After all, Spenser's hymns will excuse me for using this measure."

Saintsbury remarks in his *History of English Prosody* about the Spenserian imitators:—"Under the singular delusion that it is only the quaintness, not the music, of the Spenserian diction that unites it so close to the verse, they pepper the words of Spenser (or travesties of them) as hard as the caster will let them" and complains that "they (the Spenserian imitators) seem to be quite unaware of the splendour and the stateliness, the long-drawn sweetness and elaborate art, which he (Spenser) displays."⁹ Surely Thompson is an exception to this rather general observation. He admires the Spenserian stanza, has an eye for the beauty of the Alexandrine and strives to keep obsolete words out of his *Hymn*.

In the first stanza of his *Hymn*, Thompson fittingly remembers Spenser when he says:—

My numbers languish in a softer vein,

I pant too emulous, to flow in Spenser's train.

Welcoming May, he sings—

Come, beauteous May! in fulness of thy might,

Lead, briskly, on the mirth-infusing hours,

All-recent from the bosom of delight,

With nectar, nurtur'd and involv'd in flowers:

By Spring's sweet blush, by Nature's teeming womb;

By Hebe's dimply smile, by Flora's bloom:

By Venus' self (for Venus' self demands thee) come!

As a Spenserian Thompson undoubtedly shows great skill in the manipulation of the archaisms. He delights in the more romantic qualities of *The Faerie Queene*—qualities for which the contemporary Augustan critics had developed a surprising purblindness. He disregards the allegory which his age found writ large in Spenser and strives to draw its attention to aspects of which they had been almost oblivious. He uses the Spenserian stanza in two of his Spenserian imitations, while for the third, he adopts the seven line stanza used by Phineas Fletcher. One does not know the reason of this adaptation. Thompson's preface mentions "a modern writer"¹⁰ who objected against running the verse

into alternate and stanzas" and then refers to Prior's modification of the Spenserian stanza. Perhaps he tried to find out a sort of *via media* and please both the critical attitude of the age and his own mental bent. Another remarkable thing about him is that he is one of the few in his time who wrote Spenserian sonnets.¹¹

On the whole, Thompson's significance lies in this that long before Beatlie's *Minstrel* he builds the ground work for a romantic appreciation and understanding of Spenser. One of his contributions to the Spenserian cult is the loving and detailed handling of personified abstractions. In his *Epithalamion* many of the old figures appear before us: they have something of the new charm with which Collins was soon to invest them. Thus,

Next Liberty, the fairest nymph on ground
The flowing plenty of her golden hair
Diffusing lavishy ambrosia round

* * *

Earth smil'd and Gladness danc'd along the sky.

This felicitous use of personifications has been shown also in his *Hymn to May* where the month whose charms he is singing becomes a radiant figure, having much in common with the classical personifications of the orders or powers of nature.

REFERENCES

1. *On Mr. Popes' Works*, lines 39-40.
2. *On Laurel-Hill, At the End of the Garden, To Mr. Pope*, lines 1-7.
3. *Hymn to May*, st. 74.
4. *Notes and Allusions to The Palace of Disease*.
5. Foot-note to *Lausel Hill* etc. *op. cit.*
6. *On Spenser's Faerie Queene*, lines 4-8.
7. *On Spenser's Shephaerdes Calender*, lines 13-14.
8. *The Epithalamion* st. 9.
9. George Saintsbury: *A History of English Prosody* (London, 1923) in 3 vols. Vol. 2. p. 511.
10. Morton thinks that the reference is to Dr. Samuel Woodford. See Morton, F. P. *The Spenserian Stanza in the Eighteenth Century* (Mod. Phil) X, 1913 p. 377.
11. He wrote two sonnets:—*On Spenser's Faire Queene* and *On Spenser's Shepheardes' Calender*.

AN APPROACH TO D. H. LAWRENCE AS NOVELIST

PRALAY KUMAR DEB

Any new thing must find a new shape, then afterwards one call it 'art'. (*Frieda Lawrence*).

I

THE dragging in of extraneous data, especially inferences deduced from biographical records, has been a recurrent phenomenon in any discussion apropos of the novels of D. H. Lawrence. Consequently a streak of weirdness is perceptible in the critiques produced. We notice diverse modes of assessment which, however detract us from maintaining an uncompromising standard of objectivity to the artistic significance of the novelist; the structural patterns of his novels which extend the possibilities of their meaning. It is the predominance of impressionistic bias which deprives us of an awareness of the art-form which Lawrence has manoeuvred with so much adroitness. This art-form merits serious consideration, but unfortunately even the critics of eminence, despite their exhaustive study of the different phases of Lawrence's development, have been persistently stringent and close-fisted in giving it a generous recognition. The result is that we have a number of value-judgments, mostly based on pseudo-aesthetic attitudes, and we feel rather helpless, encountering a whole corpus of philosophical smattering and curious one-sidedness with little or no benefit, save an accumulation of certain platitudinous statements. Everybody has to evolve a theory of his own regarding the personalist equation of Lawrence, and only a few tend to determine the criteria of aesthetic values from an objective standpoint. Thus we have Lawrence on different planes of subjective criticism, the qualitative methods of approach being either social or biographical, psychological or ethical and hardly significative of a precise and technical analysis.

II

It has been customary to expatiate on the 'societal' impulse of Lawrence and to regard him either as a social reformer or as a prophetic mentor bequeathing his testament and will to the people of a

dying civilization. It is argued that Lawrence has a moral concern for the changing social values, the failure of civilization and the atrophy of 'passional' energy, and that he goes back 'to the primeval rudiments of life and the secret' and embodies a new philosophy for the regeneration of society. Without starting upon a discourse of the oppositeness of this argument it may be affirmed that there is nothing unique in the views proposed. Lawrence has only added an uninhibited reality of 'phallic consciousness' to the naturalistic philosophy, thus suggesting a fresh scale of values in order to experience the 'quick of life' or the creative flux in the ever-renewing history of the cosmos.

Raymond Williams, despite his too-muchness of insistence on the relationships between artistic and social development, has rightly pointed out "that Lawrence's position, in the question of social values, is an amalgam of original and derived ideas".¹ It is an intense realization of the Eros of the sacred mysteries which forms the basis of Lawrence's original contribution to social thinking; and that which is not original is a register of all that he has assimilated from the sociocultural heritage of the preceding centuries, particularly of the nineteenth century. Williams refers to Carlyle's *Climbing down Pisgah* and brings out the affinities between Carlyle and Lawrence in their bitter denouncement of industrialism and its resulting mechanization. The real tragedy of human life originates in the squalor and hopelessness of industrial civilization; a sense of 'disintegrated amorphousness' proves, oftener than not, a positive hindrance to the understanding of the mysteries of creation—the moments of an instinctive desire for 'shapely beauty'. F. R. Leavis, however, censures any comparison of Lawrence with Carlyle and while tracing this comparison to Desmond MacCarthy he predicts that "it is still not unlikely to recur in the *New Statesman* and the *Sunday papers*".² He asseverates that Lawrence is a great novelist of the modern phase of civilization, attesting to a 'depth, range and subtlety in the presentment of human experience' which constitutes the enduring texture of his creative achievement. Lawrence is "one of the greatest English writers of any time; and, in the nature of his greatness, has his significant relation with what is most vital in the century before him".³ What Leavis actually commends is Lawrence's 'genius of transcendent social gifts', manifesting itself in an 'astonishing richness and rapidity of development'. He also analyses Lawrence's creative art and while discussing *Women in Love* he says that the intelligence that makes Lawrence's "generalized exposition of his theme so lucid and convincing is precisely that which qualified him to be a great novelist. He experiences, perceives, and understands, and the strength of his thought lies in its sensitive adequacy to the perceptions, insights, and realizations that it orders and states in epitomizing abstraction".⁴

It is well to remember that except T. S. Eliot and a few moralistic prudes (and one of them is perhaps Charles S. Summers of the society for the Suppression of Vice who ransacked the Dial Press office in New York in 1944 and was content to seize four hundred copies of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*) nobody disputes Lawrence's title to a great novelist. It is only cultural snobbery and conservative fanaticism which retard his recognition and undermine the vital facts about him, his passionate attachment to the art of writing and his artistic ingenuity. So far as Lawrence's concept of social or naturalistic values is concerned, it may be mentioned that his reversion to the 'fecund darkness' of the primitive past or his drenching himself 'with the deep oblivion of earth's lapse and renewal' is an attitude of mind which has its roots in his passion for rejecting the industrial milieu. What he thinks really necessary is a basic adjustment to the natural instincts of life and in order to achieve this he undertakes an odyssey to the Happy Islands of the Natural Man. The whole process has its origins in the tradition of European thought and one is likely to recall in this context Rousseau's doctrine of the State of Nature and the physiocratic views advanced by Dr. Quesnay and Dupont de Nemours.

The Natural Man, in a Lawrence novel, asserts himself with fierce energy and sets the values of blood and soil against the monstrous mechanization of modern life. Unlike the Natural Man in the novels of Henri de Montherlant, he not only disparages the shams and pretences of society but also turns against 'white consciousness', i.e., 'the bloodless consciousness of the spirit' and struggles to attain a knowledge of 'blood-intimacy' by means of his essential natural impulses.⁵ Oliver Mellors, the gamekeeper, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, is a symbol of the Lawrentian Natural Man. He sees the endlessly increasing vistas of ugliness stretching into the future,—the industrial world of 'utter negation' which frantically kills off the last bit of intuitive faculty in men and women. He fights pervasive sordidness, decadent aristocracy, human philistinism and commercial exploitation and pulls down 'the insentient ideal monkeyishness of the world'. The source of his strength is sex, a warm-blooded creative impulse rising like a spiral flame through the layers of his consciousness.

Lawrence's exposition of social ideas has evoked the interests of the Marxist critics. The Marxist mode of criticism postulates a socialization rather than an individuation of artistic attainments and turns out in the long run, as an exclusively partisan and fanatical perversion of the truism that apart from being an aesthetic impetus, literature does have effects on individual man and society. Christopher Caudwell, one of the most penetrating of modern Marxist critics, makes an appraisal of Lawrence which is often independent of any Marxist directives. Caudwell deals with Lawrence's plea for the release of instinct as a

bourgeois protest against the 'possessiveness' and 'rationalizing' of an age which consciously represses the 'instinctive currents' of human life ; a protest which cannot to be equated with a socially oriented indictment of the capitalist ruts. Caudwell says about Lawrence : "His was always bourgeois culture, conscious of its decay, criticizing itself and with no solution except to go back to a time when things were different and so undo all the development that had brought bourgeois culture to this pass".⁶ The leftist critic considers Lawrence's return to the primitive as a symbol of 'regression' and 'neurosis' and unequivocally suggests : "Had he (i.e., Lawrence) born later he might have seen that it was the proletariat that was the dynamic force of the future".⁷ Caudwell's criticism betrays an attitude to formulary circumscription and ignores the fact that criticism is not an expression of pre-determined theories but a process of unfolding. A crude simplification of Lawrence's art and philosophy leads us practically nowhere and we are once again confronted with subjective prejudice rather than objective equipoise.

III

The biographical mode of criticism offers a free scope to any number of generalizations and complacently reveals the man and not the artist. There is, however, no denying the necessity of having an access to the biographical records of Lawrence particularly when we have to account for the ambivalent intentions underlying his works of art, or, rather, to analyse his problem of tension, of the clash of allegiance between his aesthetic apprehension and extra-aesthetic commitments. According to Eliseo Vivas, what happens sometimes is that "the matter of experience attempts to reveal itself in the creative act, but the non-aesthetic demands of the artist predominate or at least are strong enough to prevent a fully adequate aesthetic transmutation of matter into informed substance".⁸ Vivas's ideas about the integration between form and matter is reminiscent of the Eliotesque theory of the 'objective correlative' and appears a little more than incidental in a discussion of Lawrence's art-form. Each of the major novels of Lawrence (to wit, *the Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*) proves a complete artistic construct, and we shall do well to remember that although Lawrence's tensions and ideas occasionally get incorporated into its structure, it is to be valued as a self-sufficient unit of art which is concerned not so much with the discovery of an objective equivalent for personal emotions as with giving a new technique and a new turn to the tradition of the English novel. Lawrence's art-form is the product of an independent research ; an enriching contribution from a coal-miner's son who had never been

a 'don at Cambridge' to the progressively complex exegesis of creative art.

The eventful life of Lawrence, the nexus of his churned passions and the baffling and yet tantalizing problem of seeing him in the truest perspective have occasion the publication of a number of biographical studies, and the resources displayed therein are sufficient to canonize or to condemn the author. Catherine Carswell's short memoir, *The Savage Pilgrimage*, is a well tempered portrait of the accomplishments of Lawrence. *D. H. Lawrence, A personal Record* by E(unice) T(emple) who is none other than the childhood sweetheart of Lawrence, Jessie Chambers Wood, stands out as a perceptive inquiry. Richard Aldington's *Portrait of a Genius But*—provides a comprehensive survey of the general scheme of development in Lawrence's stormy life-history. The most indefatigable and thorough-going biographer of Lawrence is, however, Harry T. Moore whose *The Intelligent Heart* ranks as one of the best biographical works on Lawrence. Recently another biographer, Edward H. Nehls has made a valuable contribution to the fund of Lawrence—material with his *D. H. Lawrence, A Composite Biography* in three volumes.

An earlier study of Lawrence, *Son of Woman, The Story of D. H. Lawrence* by John Middleton Murry, tends to be half-biographical and half-critical and signifies a rather facile *genre* of critical methodology based on psychological investigation. Murry was one of the first to recognize the 'genius' of Lawrence (which Arnold Bennett and John Galsworthy disparaged and Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey despised), but much of what Lawrence 'was after' remained beyond his ken. Hence his commendation of *Aaron's Rod* as the pinnacle of Lawrence's creative achievement. Murry is primarily concerned with Lawrence the man and not with Lawrence the artist. In fact, he emphatically pronounces that Lawrence is 'the great life-adventurer of modern times' whose aim is not art and who deliberately gives up 'the pretence of being an artist'. His imperviousness to the art of Lawrence betrays an inadequacy of critical acumen. Aldous Huxley posits the view that *Son of Woman*, 'a curious essay in destructive hagiography', is "*Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark—for all its metaphysical subtleties and its Freudian ingenuities, very largely irrelevant".⁹ Murry lays stress on what he considers Lawrence's drift towards death, hatred of women, his anti-Christian diatribes against all accepted tenets, but his boldest contention is that Lawrence's inability to make a perfect emotional adjustment to women originated in an obfuscating 'mother-fixation', generally known as 'the Oedipus Complex'. J. W. Beach comments with a trifle slyness: "But what remains hopelessly obscure in Murry's account is whether the impotence of Lawrence—for that is what, in plain terms, he attributes

to him—was a physical or a sentimental impotence".¹⁰ We feel tempted to conclude that Murry, assuredly a Freudian, has made too much of the psychological mode of criticism by placing a too ready reliance on the formula of a childhood obsession.

It may be pointed out in this connexion that the psychological mode of criticism is only an extension of the much-maligned biographical and the function of both is more ancillary than essential in the evaluation of a work of art. It is difficult to understand how an examination, or even a solution, of the private problems of Lawrence can be a yard-stick to measure the richness of his art; or why we should rack our brains over the insignificant issues as to whether Lawrence actually read Zelia Nuttall or Bernal Diaz del Castillo or whether he cooked soups and trimmed hats for Frieda with whom he eloped in the teeth of stacked odds! Scores of pages have been written on his initiation into, and probable assimilation of, the Freudian psychology and at least a few of his novels, particularly *Sons and Lovers*, have been brought under the scrutiny of psycho-analytical stubbornness. It has become almost a craze to find out an attitude of passionate alliance and self-identification (with the heroes) in the novels of Lawrence. But, the perspectives of a dispassionate appraisal get increasingly blurred when a Cyril Beardsall (in *The White Peacock*), a Paul Morel (in *Sons and Lovers*), a Rupert Birkin (in *Women in Love*) or an Oliver Mellors (in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*) comes to assume the personality of Lawrence, revealing a kaleidoscopic pattern of sex-propelled complications—homoeroticism, the Oedipal imbroglio, erotic solipsism as a mode of vengeance or sexual primitivism in its naked responsiveness. We do not proceed much with our eyes fixed on a critico-biographical study of Lawrence, but we experience an enlargement of perception when we go through the brief editorial introduction of Aldous Huxley to *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*.

IV

The ethical mode of criticism proposes nothing less than an epiphany of the spirit of the author. It is this mode which has been largely responsible for the esoteric mysticism which sometimes enwraps Lawrence, so much so that his art-form dwindles into a matter of secondary importance. Horace Gregory's study of Lawrence (which is, however, not purely ethical) aims at a searching analysis of the poetic contents in Lawrence's life-work, but his central thesis seems to be an exploration of the spiritual progress of the latter in a vein of inspired adulation. Gregory regards Lawrence as a prophet, a salvationist, a 'pilgrim of the Apocalypse' who finds his journey's end spiritually rewarding and who writes books, while going the journey, in

order to 'save his soul'. Judgment in this light is tantamount to an unwitting admission of the limiting view that Lawrence has always put on the mantle of a moralist and may well disestablish his artistic claims instead of consolidating his position. Father William Tiverton expresses a distinct religious-cum-ethical proclivity in his *D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence* and recommends Lawrence as an edifying and positively improving novelist for the whole set of Christians. An Anglican priest, Father Tiverton finds in Lawrence a coalescence of the preacher and the poet and believes that his creative product is a sermon enshrining his 'sense of the Isness rather than the OUGHTness of religion'. He argues that Lawrence is desirous of, and attempts at, extricating the sacraments from the rhythmless and institutionalized ethics of Christianity. There is little doubt that Lawrence's professed religionist character inspires Father Tiverton to arrive at his facile conclusions. But, what he queerly forgets is that Lawrence is first of all an artist who "gives primacy to the 'living tissue' of imaginative experience and his craft is constantly moving and moving always on a dynamic base"¹¹ and that the religion of this artist (if it be called a 'religion' at all) is only the religion of sex,—sex that is vital, pure and blood-rich,—sex that flows 'like a form of sunshine' through the whole process of human consciousness, independent of any well-defined religious or mystical association.

The fact is that Lawrence's views on sex are opposed to all conventions, Christian and other, and while expounding these views he has laid emphasis on the 'true relatedness' between a man and a woman which ultimately opens up a new territory—"the holy ground"—of 'an adjustment in consciousness to the basic physical realities'. Lawrence is intensely aware of "the dark presence of the otherness that lies beyond the boundaries of man's conscious mind".¹² The significance of sex-experience consists precisely in the knowledge of this 'otherness' which is usually equated with the divine, with God or the Infinite or 'the Holy Ghost which is with us after our Pentecost'. It is this 'otherness' which the individual may get in touch with 'in his pure singleness, in his totality of consciousness, in his oneness of being'. The idea of Lawrence is perhaps not to replace theology by biology or to define God in terms of life (as T. E. Hulme would say), but to provide a clue to the realization of the mysterious creative urge driving all existence since the dawn of creation. And this realization occurs in a moment of moments when the agony of desire melts into the ecstasy of wisdom, causing the extinction of individual consciousness and then its phoenix-like resurrection. Witness the following extract from *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

And it seemed she was like the sea, nothing but dark waves rising and heaving, heaving with a great swell, so that slowly her whole

darkness was in motion, and she was ocean rolling its dark, dumb mass. Oh, and far down inside her the deeps parted and rolled asunder, in long, far-travelling billows, and ever, at the quick of her, the depths parted and rolled asunder from the centre of soft plunging, as the plunger went deeper and deeper, touching, lower, and she was deeper and deeper disclosed, and heavier the billows of her rolled away to some shore, uncovering her, and closer and closer plunged the palpable unknown, and further and further rolled the waves of herself away from herself, leaving her, till suddenly, in a soft, shuddering convulsion the quick of all her plasm was touched—and she was gone. She was gone, she was not, and she was born : a woman.

The extract refers to the sexual climax reached by Connie 'Chatterley' and shows the central meaning of the Laurentian cult of sex which has been exalted with a Blake-like, 'terrifying honesty'. Here we find the triumphant emergence of sex as the most powerful instinct of life which brings about 'the resurrection of the body' by offering a glimpse of the timeless in a world of flux. Connie experiences the drive of primordial creativeness, 'the life within life, the sheer warm potent loveliness', and gets to know the beauty and truth of 'phallic mystery', coming in, wave upon wave.

And she lay and wondered at the wonder of life, and of being. . . . As she ran home in the twilight the world seemed a dream ; the trees in the park seemed bulging and surging, at anchor on a tide, and the heave of the slope to the house was alive.

Herein, then, is contained the paramount importance of Lawrence's attitude to sex : sex itself forms the basis of salvation and illumines the purpose of life which is to transcend the state of equilibrium existing between a man and a woman and to achieve a new oneness, 'a new paradisal unit regained from the duality', indicative of a complete merging into each other in order to keep up 'the rhythm of the cosmos'.

Lawrence proposes to surpass 'the great Christian tenet' for the sake of 'something new' and believes that people should fulfil their desires in a sacred manner, in the exigencies of their creative spirit, thus reaching against the 'reaction' of Christianity itself. Consider his views which find expression in his letter to Catherine Carswell (dated 16 July, 1916).

What we want is the fulfilment of our desires, down to the deepest and most spiritual desire. The body is immediate, the spirit is beyond. . . .

Lawrence speaks of his deepest desire to form pure relationship 'with the universe, for truth in being' and then continues :

It is this establishing of pure relationships which makes heaven.

wherein we are immortal, like the angels, and mortal, like men, both. And the way to immortality is in the fulfilment of desire. Once we understand what Lawrence actually means by 'immortality' and 'the fulfilment of desire' we get at the roots of whatever 'religion' he has formulated. We may not go so far as to agree with Graham Hough whose contention in *The Dark Sun* is that Lawrence breaks into new spiritual territories outside the bounds of Christianity and celebrates 'at once an older and a newer religion'.

V

We shall now embark upon a discussion of the artistic values of D. H. Lawrence. His art-form displays a composite richness: a striking structural originality and the overtones and hidden correspondences of an emotive sensibility; or, better still, the sustained investigations of an experimentalist and the integral symbols deftly used by a sensitive poet. His craft testifies to a variety of technical innovations, while his vision concentrates on exploring the vital process or the inwardness of life in the crucial moments of passionate intensity. There are, of course, certain deficiencies, irrelevant accretion of details, cloying repetition of the sex-act alongside of the Anglo-Saxon four-letter words it offers facilities for and commonplace use of linguistic fitments in straight narratives (refer to pp. 218-20 of the unexpurgated edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in Penguin Books), but unalloyed excellence is only a myth and a wish-fulfilment in the world of fictive literature.

There are critics who do not attach any importance to the art and artifice of Lawrence and remain almost blind to the radical change which he has brought about in the form and technique of English novel. A friend of the author of *After Strange Gods*, Herbert Read finds in Lawrence a whole gamut of moralistic predilections and denies him even a modicum of artistic sense. In an open letter addressed to Edward Dahlberg, Herbert Read writes: "He (i.e., Lawrence) is a moralist of a pattern that is ancient enough to seem very new to us—a prophet of the Hebraic stature, fierce, passionate, and even inspired. As an artist, however, he is not merely flawed: he is grotesque".¹³ Read maintains that the novels of Lawrence are relentlessly crude and produce the disappointing impression of an indelicate handling of plot, characterization, form, style and atmosphere. The faults of Lawrence are, however, endemic to the modern novel as such (so runs Read's commentary): "its fatal lack of style or form, its universal banality and triviality of observation".¹⁴ This trenchant criticism of Lawrence, and, for that matter, of the whole of modern English novel, appears surprisingly inept, because the apparent formlessness of Lawrence as well as of the modern novel is a new mode of recapturing the multi-layered

and multi-dimensional experiences of human life: at once an arabesque and a crystallization of the fragmentary, disorderly and yet quintessential moments of the consciousness of Life. The Happy-Ever-After-mood or the evanescent note of a threnody completely disappears from the tradition of English novel, yielding place to a coherent incoherence which is only an artistic *alias* of modern civilization. Consider the following two extracts from *To the Lighthouse* and *Sons and Lovers* respectively, each forming the conclusion of the novel.

(a) She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision.

(b) But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly.

The extracts quoted refer to an inconclusiveness whose delineation requires a new kind of artistic and technical virtuosity, much unlike that of *Joseph Andrews* or even *Wuthering Heights*. Virginia Woolf has given us (via Lily Briscoe) an unfinished conception of life, a deeper understanding of the eternal tragedy of human aspirations which expresses itself in so many ramifications that the last word can never be said about it. As her novel gets going, the lighthouse described assumes the character of a universal symbol. Every life has its lighthouses, certain desires and aspirations which make the heart sick by being deferred in fulfilment, and what is strange is that even if we realize them we do not get the same enjoyment as we expected out of them at the beginning. Virginia Woolf communicates this symbol whose endless tragic implications defy the narrow framework of a novel. The conclusion of *To the Lighthouse* is inconclusive, because it begins a new chapter of life and aims at expansion rather than completion. The extract from Lawrence reveals the psychology of the hero who seems to visualize both death-in-life and life-in-death, the broken arcs of warring experiences, and ultimately to accept the direction towards life with a feeling of resurrection. Indeed, the conclusion of the novel signifies 'not rounding off but opening out' (to borrow the phrase from E. M. Forster) and its abruptness is only an indirect comment on the contemporary situation where 'things fall apart and lose their coherence.' There is neither any point of reference (for the belief in the immortality of the soul has been shattered) nor any firm principle to regulate the values of a lost generation (for rapid industrialization has sapped the natural impulses). The only hope of regeneration perhaps lies in an adjustment to the fundamental physical reali-

ties of life. As Lawrence himself would say at the outset of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*:

Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future. It is ostensibly clear that Lawrence is speaking of a situation which has been worsened by the First World War, but his conviction in the triumph of life has not suffered any defeat. One feels tempted to say that 'the glowing town' of *Sons and Lovers* is transformed into the 'little glow' of love between Connie and Mellors in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Lust for life and life for love gradually enter into an artistic congress.

The fact is that Lawrence has repudiated the tradition of the consciously well-made novel and struck out a path to the 'open form' in which he ultimately excels. He continues the 'great tradition' of the English novel, enriching it with a dynamic art-form which testifies to his direct apprehension of the multiple facets of experience and evokes a pattern of symbols which are, in reality, a translation of extraordinary emotive suggestiveness. One has to pass on from *Tom Jones*, *The Old Wives' Tale* and *The Forsyte Saga* to *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* in order to understand the significance of this art-form. Fielding Bennett and Galsworthy feel their themes from the outside and observe a strict adherence to the rules of an ideal construction, but Lawrence writes from within—from inside the people and the scenes he creates. His observations are unmistakably personal, and, as V. S. Pritchett has said, "personal to Lawrence, they become personal to us".¹⁵ Fittingly enough, his art-form is also a personal organization: invention of 'a new world within the known world' of ours.

VI

The maturity of Lawrence's art-form is to be found in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent* have been written in a fashion which is often rambling and padded and suggests novelty rather than justness in the marshalling of episodic details and the chunks of ideology. There is divergence of opinion regarding the form and structure of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Keith Sagar recognizes the far-reaching originality of *The Rainbow* where Lawrence marks a striking departure from the nineteenth century aesthetics to explore the untrodden avenues of thought and perception, but she presently observes that "*Lady Chatterley's Lover* is far from giving us a complete return to the creative wholeness of *The Rainbow*".¹⁶ 'The creative wholeness', according to Sagar, has been marred by the unsuccessful use of dialect, the unrealised symbolism of the

phallus and the failure in the treatment of Clifford. Julian Moynahan, however, speaks of the superior qualities of Lawrence's novel and praises it for "the rich simplicity of its structural design", which has been "realized most powerfully and significantly in spatial terms, in terms of setting".¹⁷ He refers to the woodland setting of the novel; a setting which is menaced on one side by a bleak manor house and on the other by the industrial installations of a mining village. Here, in this woodland setting, the vital instinct of sex blossoms in its ineluctable mystery, responding to the changing beauties of the natural world. The divergence of opinion is, however, no deterrent to an appreciation of the composite art-form of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. We call the art-form 'composite', because it embodies 'an organization of originality' (to borrow the phrase from Valéry) which brings drama and poetry together in a single perspective—in 'an episodic intensification', if the term is not too specific a one to use. Observe the episode which forms the background of the first sexual intimacy between Connie and Mellors. On a 'lovely sunny day with great tufts of primroses under the hazels, and many violets dotting the paths', Connie comes in the afternoon to the coops and finds a newly-hatched chick, 'the most alive little spark of a creature in seven kingdoms at that moment'. She crouches to watch the fearless new life. She is fascinated, but at the same time she feels the unbearable agony of her sterile forlornness. The keeper draws out the chick for her from under the mother bird, and as she admiringly looks at it, tears spring to her eyes. The situation gently leads them on to a world of instinctive desire: 'Shall you come to the hut?' he said, in a quiet neutral voice. The moment is intensely dramatic—the moment, 'one and infinite', when the poetry of life is being felt in the flood and along the heart. It is, in fact, a simultaneous revelation of the Drama of Life and the Poetry of Life; a whispering address to the sacred image of the phallus, placed at the centre of the Cosmos.

It may, however, be noted that Lawrence's contribution to novelistic technique is not the consciously patterned structure of a dramatist but the impressionistic 'shimmeriness' of a poet or of a painter whose structure is a proof of his living fidelity to his protean and pervasive individuality. As J. W. Beach points out, "Lawrence, in poetry and the novel, is an impressionist because he is not concerned with the dramatic shape of the thing but with the living "feel" of it".¹⁸ That Lawrence is an 'impressionist' becomes luminously clear on a close perusal of the scenes which reach the dimension of the 'constitutive symbols'.¹⁹ Elisco Vivas holds that "the constitutive symbol is a creative synthesis of empirical matter which manifests itself in dramatic and moral terms and which functions categorically . . . the constitutive symbol is not arrived at by a mere reshuffling or re-arranging of the matter

of experience. It is *creative* and it is a *genuine synthesis*".²⁰ Stripped of its philosophical connotations, the 'constitutive symbol' may well mean an imaginative construct, artistic and complete in itself and adequately expressive of a highly charged emotional reality which has, however, a direct relevance to the significance of the events preceding and a positive bearing on the subsequent course of action. It is in dealing with the 'constitutive symbols' that Lawrence has shown his mastery of the impressionistic technique.

Let us take for instance the moon-shattering scene from *Women in Love* which shows Lawrence at his best. The scene is an organized complex of symbol and poetry and it betrays the full force of a visual imagination which builds up an impression of the total structure or of the mass by means of certain spontaneously realized colour-combinations, reminding us of painters like Manet and Pissarro. Birkin stones the image of the moon, reflected on the waters of a pond, while Ursula watches him from the adjoining woodland areas. The scene telescopes Birkin's past, present and future in a single moment which throbs with the immensity of an emotional apprehension, and the 'epitomizing abstraction' of the sequential mood finds a concrete expression in the description of a natural phenomenon which mockingly stultifies all human endeavour to destroy it. Birkin is, in fact, trying to shatter the image of the possessive womankind, for he believes in the unimpaired sovereignty of the individual consciousness. He has been suffering from hopelessness and frustration and deep-seated fear for women. Hence his unusual conduct and ravings: he wants to extricate himself from his predicament and finding the situation unrelentingly sickly he curses Cybele, the Syria Dea, at times identified in Greece with Aphrodite. Birkin inwardly reacts against the domination of the fatal woman-figure—'la belle dame sans merci'—no matter whether or not she is a goddess of the classical mythology or a woman of the Brangwen family.

Let us now quote a few lines from this scene (the title of which is, incidentally, 'Moony') in order to substantiate the impressionistic qualities of Lawrence's art-form.

Then again there was a burst of sound, and a burst of brilliant light, the moon had exploded on the water, and was flying asunder, in flakes of white and dangerous fire. Rapidly, like white birds, the fires all broken rose across the pond, fleeing in clamorous confusion, battling with the flock of dark waves that were forcing their way in . . . But at the centre, the heart of all, was still a vivid, incandescent quivering of a white moon not quite destroyed, a white body of fire writhing and striving and not even now broken open, not yet violated.

The picture, brilliant in itself and shot through with different shades of colour and touches of a living sense of beauty, is a testi-

mony to a kind of personal rhythm which Lawrence employs in communicating the vibrations of an imaginative reality. In almost all his descriptive passages we notice this personal rhythm which puts us on the pulse of what he describes, on the reality and suggestiveness of all that we visualize in projections.

We should quote a few passages from Lawrence in order to do justice to the exclusiveness of his art-form. These passages will furnish us with some ideas as to how Lawrence sees and feels into 'the life of things' (to borrow the phrase from Wordsworth) and how he communicates the mysterious potentialities which they contain and so powerfully symbolize.

(a) The tall white lilies were reeling in the moonlight, and the air was charged with their perfume as with a presence she touched the big, pallid flowers on their petals, then shivered. They seemed to be stretching in the moonlight. She put her hand into one white bin: the gold scarcely showed on her fingers by moonlight. She bent down to look at the binful of yellow pollen; but it only appeared dusky. Then she drank a deep draught of the scent. It almost made her dizzy. (*Sons and Lovers*).

(b) Here the stone leapt up from the plain of earth, leapt up in a manifold, clustered desire each time, up, away from the horizontal earth, through twilight and dusk and the whole range of desire, through the swerving, the declination, ah, to the ecstasy, the touch, to the meeting and the consummation, the meeting, the clasp, the close embrace, the neutrality, the perfect swooning consummation, the timeless ecstasy. There his soul remained, at the apex of the arch, clinched in the timeless ecstasy, consummated. (*The Rainbow*). The first extract points to a blend of visual and tactile sensation, reminding us of no less an association than Keats's (Cf. his *Ode to a Nightingale*). Along with Mrs. Morel we see the flowers, touch them and feel their intoxicating beauty in the moonlight. The significance of the passage, however, lies not only in its telling description of flowers but also in acquainting us with the mystery of life which Mrs. Morel experiences while sharing in a psychical communion with the living world of Nature. She is pregnant with Paul, and it seems that the unborn child is baptised with the benedictions of a cosmic feeling. 'The binful of yellow pollen' suggests a vital source of life and the dizziness of Mrs. Morel springs from her instinctive realization of the ecstasies and agonies of a mother. In fact, a woman is at one with Nature in the ultimate analysis, because it is they who give birth to Life and continue the eternal cycle of Existence. The second extract reveals the experience of Will Brangwen, and the Cathedral described becomes such an organic symbol as to bring about a seamless integration of the religious life of a man and the

spiritual realm he craves for in his solitary musings. Lawrence seems to have felt the pulse-beats of the pointed stone arch of a Gothic Cathedral, because his is an imagination which is mobile and concerned as much with the animate as with the inanimate. Each word used in the passage quoted contributes to the whole effect which is an elucidation of the crescendo of emotional urgencies, leading on to a mergence with the 'timeless ecstasy'.

The characters of a Laurentian novel are often made to see the exciting and flicker-splashing patterns of non-human life and to realize their own perfections or short-comings against the backdrop of a vast cosmic panorama. The language of non-human life has a profound power of evocation and can exert a considerable influence on human minds by articulating 'the intimations of other worlds'. Consider the following extracts from *Women in Love*:

(a) Ursula was watching the butterflies, of which there were dozens near the water, little blue ones suddenly snapping out of nothingness into a jewel-life, a large black-and-red one standing upon a flower and breathing with his soft wings, intoxicatingly, breathing pure, ethereal sunshine; two white ones wrestling in the low air; there was halo round them;

(b) And suddenly the rabbit, which had been crouching as if it were a flower, so still and soft, suddenly burst into life. Round and round the court it went, as if shot from a gun, round and round like a furry meteorite, in a tense hard circle that seemed to bind their brains. They all stood in amazement, smiling uncannily, as if the rabbit were obeying some unknown incantation. Round and round it flew on the grass under the old red walls like a storm. The first description speaks of the singular vitality, colour and ecstasy which suffuse the world of the butterflies. Ursula rises and drifts away, 'unconscious like the butterflies', because she imagines a world of health and hope when the whole fabric of civilization has been disintegrated. The butterfly-imagery proceeds through a plethora of colours and ultimately becomes an approach to a deeper realization of the delicate magic and the unknown forces of 'the tremendous non-human quality of life'. The second description registers a more distinctive and subtler exercise of imaginative sensibility and conveys the very liveliness of the rabbit, its flowering into life, its rapid spunky movement,—'round and round'—and its obedient response to some unknown incantation. Similies like 'like a furry meteorite' and 'like a storm' are directed towards an appreciation of the rabbit's leaping pulse and unrestricted twirl.

We have already mentioned Lawrence's resort to the 'open form' which is by far his greatest contribution to the development of English novel. The 'open form' has become a coherent tradition in the

modern age ; a radically new process that starts with Hardy, Conrad, Forster and Lawrence and functions most consistently in effecting the expansion and dynamic progress of fictive experiences. The modern novels cannot be warded off as simply inconclusive ; rather they present a multi-angular complex of experience which invites and admits of further investigation, scrutiny and assessment. We go forward instead of being bogged down to a finalized and irrevocable system of values and experience the unrealized potentialities of certain thoughts and ideas which are so richly fertile as to move out of the limitations of a novelistic frame-work. Alan Friedman has discussed at length the salient features of the 'open form' and insisted on the ethical assumptions that guide it. Friedman takes his cue from *Strains of Discord: Studies in Literary Openness* by Robert M. Adams who defines the 'open form' as "a structure of meanings intents, and emphases" deliberately including "a major unresolved conflict" and considers Lawrence's novels as "not, ordinarily, open to any notable degree"²¹. Friedman's point of departure however, consists in his understanding of the term on a wider and more precise scale. He believes that Lawrence's novels are quite 'open', because they are 'open ethical experiences'—structures of conscience rendered as a continuous movement of moral experience. Allow us to quote what he says about his purpose: "I am exploring a movement: the flux of conscience, the progress from innocence to experience, with special attention on the final arc of the continuous movement. My emphasis is on the 'goal' of experience ; on the function of conclusion with respect to course and climax"²². After discussing the 'openness' of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* he arrives at the conclusion: "Only becoming, process, promise, transcendence, has value in Lawrence's stream of life ; in conclusion, may I add, lies corruption"²³.

Friedman is perfectly right in his conception of Lawrence's novels. We may only add that the alleged inconclusiveness of these novels is not only suggestive of a process of becoming but also evocative of a sense of on-going, of a symbol of the imperfect experiences of life which reach out towards a greater idea of perfection, of 'the wave which can not halt' but which proceeds towards the shore. We may look at the concluding portions of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

(a) And the rainbow stood on the earth . . . She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven.

(b) "You can't have two kinds of love, Why should you!"

"It seems as if I can't", he said. "Yet I wanted it".

"You can't have it, because it's false, impossible", She said.

"I don't believe that", he answered.

The conclusion of *The Rainbow* offers us the vision of a radical change, in spite of the sterile deadlock between Ursula and Skrebensky in the structure of themes and we are likely to feel that the urgency of social re-orientation is greater than that of individual requirements. It is strange to see that F. R. Leavis has nothing to say against the charge of imperfection which is sometimes hurled at *The Rainbow*. He holds the opinion that 'the absence of an inevitable close' does not matter at all and justifies the excellence of the novel on other grounds than that of having a satisfying conclusion: "The rendering of the continuity and rhythm of life through the individual lives has involved a marvellous invention of form, and no one who sees what is done will complain of the absence of what is not done"²⁴ We propose to submit that the conclusion of *The Rainbow* should be as it is like, because the experience of Ursula does not recognize the boundary lines of a closed form and is elevated to the sphere of a psychic realization which is open and expanding. Her vision of a glorious change on the plane of material civilization is also a resolution of her rejuvenated soul. The conclusion of *Women in Love* is apparently more disquieting, but it points to a deeper philosophy of life. Gerald Crich has been frozen to death and observing his corpse Birkin suffers a psychic shipwreck, because, as we are told, he believes that the completion of a male individual requires not only female friendship but also male friendship. Birkin's theory of life spurs on to a controversy which remains unresolved, and will remain so, because the passionate struggle in the individual consciousness to determine what constitutes the perfection of love-ethic is a gyration of eternal mystery.

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- ¹ *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, Pelican, Penguin Books, 1961, p. 199.
- ² *D. H. Lawrence/Novelist*, Peregrine, Penguin Books, 1964, p. 17.
- ³ *Ibid.* p. 18.
- ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 163.
- ⁵ See Edwin Muir, *Essays on Literature and Society*, London, Hogarth Press, 1965, pp. 150-64.
- ⁶ *D. H. Lawrence in Perspectives on Modern Literature*, ed. F. J. Hoffman, New York, Row, Peterson, 1962, p. 174.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ *D. H. Lawrence: The Failure and the Triumph of Art*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1961, p. 9.
- ⁹ Introduction, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, London, Heinemann, 1932, p. X.
- ¹⁰ *The Twentieth Century Novel*, Indian Edition, Ludhiana, 1965, p. 366.
- ¹¹ Mark Schorer, *Introduction to Lady Chatterley's Lover* in *D. H. Lawrence, Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover and Other Essays*, Penguin, 1961, p. 142.

¹² Aldous Huxley, *op. cit.* p. XII.

¹³ Edward Dahlberg and Herbert Read, *Truth is More Sacred*, London Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 71.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 73.

¹⁵ *The Living Novel*, Arrow Edition, London, 1960, p. 138.

¹⁶ *The Art of D. H. Lawrence*, Cambridge University Press, 1966, p. 195.

¹⁷ *The Deed of Life*, Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 145.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.* p. 384.

¹⁹ The phrase is being used in the sense in which Eliseo Vivas uses it in his discussion of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*: 'components of 'works of art'. *op. cit.* p. 273.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 275.

²¹ Quoted by Alan Friedman, *The Turn of The Novel*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 34.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.* p. 178.

²⁴ *Op. cit.* pp. 150-1.

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND LITERATURE*

AMALENDU BOSE

One of the truisms of literary criticism is that the literature of any period is closely interlinked with the intellectual milieu of that period. This intellectual milieu may be predominantly religious or philosophical or politico-economic in character ; it comprises ideas that are more or less widely shared, if not always thoroughly understood. Thus, the most significant authors of eighteenth century England echo the assumptions of Cartesian philosophy ; the most valuable works of the Romantic Revolution are impregnated with Rousseauism and German idealism ; representative writers of the Early Victorian period reflect ideas of Utilitarianism ; the principles of the theory of Evolution and its concomitant implications are writ large on the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century. To understand art we must examine its background of ideas since it is the emotional equivalent of these ideas that forms the material and content of art. The man of letters does not necessarily initiate ideas, he may derive them from the philosopher and give them a stylized and formalized expression. The art is in the formalization.

In the intellectual milieu of the twentieth century we can distinguish four major strands of thought : (1) the ideas released by the materialistic interpretation of history, commonly known as Marxism ; (2) the world-view suggested by modern Mathematics and Physics, especially its conceptions of Time, Space and the Fourth Dimension ; (3) the new knowledge given to mankind by Anthropology concerning different types of social structure and customs, deep-seated primitive beliefs and practices lingering among the sophisticated and mechanized societies of the present day ; and (4) the new knowledge of man's mental life and outer behaviour acquired through Psychoanalysis. Certain terms taken from this storehouse of new knowledge have become part and parcel of the modern man's daily jargon, such as : thesis, antithesis, synthesis, contradiction, dialectic ; totem, taboo, archetype, cultural pattern ; quantum, relativity, four-dimensional continuum, seven-dimensional space, the Great Architect of the Universe as a Pure Mathematician ; inhibition, subconscious, libido, split personality, fixation, Oedipus Complex &c. These terms and the ideas they represent, often loosely and feebly understood by the average man, nevertheless enter his thought-process as well as his expression

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somehow or the other. Thus, Modern Literature, willy-nilly, testifies to a considerable influence of these new lines of thinking, and of all these new lines of thinking, I believe, it is Psychoanalysis which has contributed most effectively and creatively to literature. It will be my endeavour in this talk to give an outline and a brief estimate of such contributions.

These contributions are spread over in three fields : (1) in Creative literature, Poetry, Drama and Fiction ; (2) in Applied Criticism such as the interpretation and elucidation of particular works and authors' themes and trends ; (3) in Theory of Literature, seeking to illuminate many hitherto-unapprehended aspects of literary creation, especially, the creative process.

Before I proceed further, I should state briefly the main findings of Psychoanalysis so that we may correctly appreciate the correlation between this new science and literature. The history of Psychoanalysis has been made familiar to us by the very personal survey of the subject made by Sigmund Freud himself. We are told how Freud, working as an advanced medical student in Vienna under Josef Breuer, learnt that the symptoms of hysterical patients depend upon traumata, i.e., the forgotten scenes of their lives. He learnt the technique of the therapy which cures these patients, the technique of *katharsis*, i.e., recalling forgotten experiences to the patients under hypnosis, thus reproducing to them those experiences. Says Freud : "We guided the patients' attention directly to the traumatic scene in which the symptom had arisen, we endeavoured to find therein the psychic conflict, and free the repressed effect. ... The associations of the patients went back from the scene to be explained to earlier experiences, and forced the analysis to occupy itself with the past. At first it went quite regularly to the time of puberty. Later the analytic work ... went further back into the years of childhood." Here we arrive at the distinctive Freudian concept of the three layers of the human personality: the 'id', the 'ego', and the 'super-ego.' The id is the unconscious, instinctive, primal part of our nature, far the vaster territory of the human personality which, in the words of C. E. M. Joad, "is like an iceberg ; only a small part appears above the level of consciousness, the remainder is below. This remainder, known as the unconscious mind, or more simply as 'the unconscious,' is not only the larger but also the more important part. The part which appears in consciousness is usually held to have arrived in consciousness *via* the unconscious in which it originated, so that the unconscious may be said to determine the contents of the conscious. The ego is the self of which we are normally conscious, the super-ego is the conception of that self which is imposed upon the ego by culture and civilization. The super-ego is what the ego would like to be in its role of a fully

cultivated and civilized adult." The contents and workings of the conscious part of the human personality are but the expression of forces deep down within the personality, forces whose genesis ordinarily escapes detection, which cannot ordinarily be controlled. The function of Psychoanalysis is to explore these submerged currents in the unconscious. In his monograph, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud examines various types of mistakes that men commit, e.g., forgetting names and order of words, mistakes in speech (he would have done well to cite some instances of malapropism and spoonerism); wrongly carried-out actions. He concludes that we forget a thing or make a mistake about it because the thing is a source of pain to us or because there is a taboo or censorship on it. There is a force outside impulse—it may be the superimposed code of social morality or it may be my own ideal of what things should be—which represses the impulse. On analysis, Freud found that the primal impulses of infantile life are constantly beaten into socially-acceptable shape by the environment into which the child finds himself, and as the child grows, a greater number of these impulses disappear—disappear not in the sense that they cease to exist or are rooted out but in the sense that they sink down into the abysmal depths of the personality. Freud's proof in this regard comes out in several works, especially in *Contributions to the Theory of Sex* and the important work *The Interpretation of Dreams*. He says: "We have thus been forced to perceive in every fixed aberration from the normal sexual life, a fragment of inhibited development and infantilism." Again he says: "We also added an explanation for the preponderance of perverse tendencies in the psychoneurotics, by recognizing in these tendencies collateral fillings of side branches caused by the shifting of the main river bed through repression, and we then turned our examination to the sexual life of the infantile period. ... It rather seemed to us that the child brings along into the world germs of sexual activity and that even while taking nourishment, it at the same time also enjoys sexual gratification ... the forces which are destined to hold the sexual instinct in certain tracks are built up in infancy with the help of education at the expense of the greater part of the perverse sexual feelings." The child's personality is unconscious; the ego and far less the super-ego do not yet come into play in infancy; as he grows older, as the ego develops and he begins to be aware of the super-ego, the native libidinous impulses begin to be repressed or inhibited. But the impulses, under the pressure of an inner conflict with the super-ego, remain clotted or jumbled, become distorted by association with other inhibited impulses, waiting for an opportunity to rise up to the surface of the deep waters of the unconscious. That all the time the inhibited impulses are there, is proved by man's dream-life. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*,

Freud says : "We learn from analysis that the very wish has given rise to the dream, and whose fulfilment the dream proves to be, has itself originated in childhood, so that one is astonished to find that the child with all his impulses survives in the dream."—The statement asserts that, psychologically, the child is indeed the father of the man ; that in dream-life—dream being a condition when the super-ego has slackened its tight control—man enjoys wish-fulfilment. The proof of this view of dream-life is furnished by Freud's technique of dream-analysis. This technique, again, is essentially the same as the technique of psychotherapy, the psychological treatment of neuroses and other abnormal mental conditions (which often are attended by corresponding abnormalities of physical condition : e.g., the case of the Indian Brahmin student in Vienna who, whenever he indulged in bouts of debauchery, tabooed by his society, found himself covered by itches which were nothing but the physical reflex of a remorseful conscience). This is the technique of free association. If we imagine the inhibited impulses to be a frightful tangle of thread, the psycho-analyst may be imagined to be the man who patiently sits to disentangle and straighten out the thread. The patient has to be guided into a voluntary confession in which innumerable experiences and impulses of his past life that appeared to have been swallowed up in the dark abyss of memory begin to rise up and be recalled—so that even the patient himself is astonished to remember all these—and these are recalled, not necessarily in a chronological, logical or coordinated manner ; the therapist then, being in possession of all the data, analyzes how and where the inhibition started growing into a complex and how it finally distorted itself into neurotic behaviour or obsession. As the patient realizes the source of his complex, and as through this process of therapeutic confession he is enabled to give verbal expression to the repressed impulses, he becomes cured of the complex and returns to normalcy. This technique of attaining to emotional sanity through voluntary confession is nothing new ; it has been practised in the Roman Church for ages, and the famous *Confessions* of St. Augustine witnesses to its efficacy. The doctrine of associationism too, the association of ideas I mean, had been previously formulated by Hartley, Hume and the well-known British Empiricist James Mill. Freud's originality lies in combining the theory and the technique after sharpening each and rendering each into an accurate science, and moreover, in utilizing the theory and the technique to therapeutic purposes.

As Freud narrates in his *History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*, the movement soon split itself into the deviationist doctrines of two of his most brilliant students, Adler and Jung, who, accepting the basic theory of the psychotherapeutic technique, sought to find in human psychology a key other than the Freudian libido. Adler found

that the individual comes into the world, weak, insignificant, ill-equipped against Nature: "Every child becomes conscious of its inability to cope single-handed with the challenge of existence. This feeling of inferiority is the driving force, the starting point from which every childish striving originates. It determines ... the very goal of his existence." Adler's train of thought was started by Freud's theory that many of the symptoms of nervous persons indicated an attempt to compensate for real or imagined weakness, particularly the sense of guilt. According to Adler, the mind is an instrument of compensation, a tool to build for the individual an adaptation through which he may achieve that which his defect otherwise places beyond his reach. In terms of Adler's theory of inferiority complex and compensatory substitutes, the behaviour patterns of certain literary personalities become easily understandable. Alexander Pope, physically a puny, unhealthy man, proved his valour against strong opponents by his lashing satire. Byron, a cripple, forced himself to the exhibitionist act of crossing the Strait of Bosphorus. The loss of his beloved which Swinburne had sustained through his own neurotic deportment, he compensated for in the splendid love-poem, "The Triumph of Time." The Adlerian thesis, extremely valuable to the educationist and the social reformer, is not however so fruitful to the artist as the theories of Jung. Like Adler, Jung rejected Freud's theory that sex plays the central part in emotional maladjustment. His conception of the libido corresponds to Plato's idea of Eros, a universal psychic energy or—as Nietzsche would call it—the will to life, expressing itself now in one, now in another instinctive channel. Jung enunciated a distinction between two types of personality, the extrovert—one whose emotional energy is directed outwards, primarily towards the objects of the physical world—and the introvert—one whose emotional energy is directed inwards, that is, towards the realm of fantasy and imagination. Furthermore, Jung emphasizes the emotional attitudes inherited from our ancestors. Freud's repression theory too receives a twist in Jung's hands when he describes the unconscious as primal and irrational; the unconscious thinks in symbols not because of repression but because such is the nature of free uncritical thinking.

That the new Psychology propounded by Freud, Jung and Adler should at once catch the attention of men of letters was almost inevitable. In their own way, artists had been for quite a considerable time exploring in their art the inner world of human thoughts and feelings in preference to the domain of action and physical excitement. Psychological poetry and the psychological novel had already come into vogue in the Victorian era. Browning said: "My stress lay on the development of the human soul; nothing else is worth study." More and more writers came under the fascination of the unexplored terri-

tory of the human mind, although the story of action continued to have hold upon the public. The second half of the nineteenth century shows both kinds of writers—let me call them the extroverts and the introverts in art—existing side by side: Dickens, Thackeray, Charles Read, Hardy, among the novelists, dealing primarily with men and women in a state of action; George Eliot, Meredith, George Moore and Henry James, attempting to give us slow-moving, close-up representations of their characters. Sometimes the two methods co-exist in the same author. Consider the works of Tolstoy: *Anna Karenina* employs both methods, psychological analysis as well as the presentation of character in a state of action, while in *The Death of Ivan Ilyitch*, there occurs an extraordinarily detailed revelation of a dying man's mental processes. Again, compare the representative works of two other great Russians: Tourgenieff's *Rudin* and Dostoieffsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. No reader can say that Tourgenieff's insight into psychology is inferior to Dostoieffsky's, nor that Dostoieffsky is deficient in inventing physical action. Yet, the broad generalization is valid that Tourgenieff's *forte* is the world of outer action while Dostoieffsky's primary concern is with the mental states of his characters. Compare again the two great short story-writers of the century, perhaps of all time, Maupassant and Chekhov: both possess uncanny insight into the myriad mysteries of the human mind and with both the primary concern is the telling of a story; yet with Maupassant, the incident, while with Chekhov the mental reaction to the incident, looms large. In the twentieth century, this psychological emphasis becomes further accentuated until we reach in Maeterlink (I refer especially to *The Trembling of the Veil*) a stage where outward action has been almost entirely purged out of art, leaving a sole residue of emotional reverie. Perhaps this concentrated emphasis on man's inner life can be explained in terms of the contemporary social milieu; perhaps one would and could say that the *laissez faire* capitalistic economy of the nineteenth century had led civilization into such a rut that the sensitive man had no way before him but that of withdrawal into his own mind. But it has to be realized that issues deeper than even the socio-economic *malaise* are involved here. The first quarter of the present century witnessed a revolution in nearly all branches of human knowledge. Physics and Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics, the Medical sciences and the Social sciences, Art and Technology, all were urged towards new theory and practice at a break-neck speed. The consolidated knowledge of the nineteenth century began to change into the atomised knowledge of the twentieth. And the characteristic feature of the new Epistemology was analysis, the attempt to track knowledge to its pristine and sharp-pointed extremity.

When by 1910, the new science of Psychoanalysis had created suffi-

cient stir—let us not emphasize here the inadequacies of Freud's early theories nor the deviationist controversies—writers, as it were, embraced it with outstretched arms. The old type of descriptive psychology in literature, presenting a coherent procession of thoughts and feelings, came now to be replaced by analytical psychology in which the logical as well as the irrational, the sane as well as the freakish, the normal as well as the perverse, found equal admittance. What has been called the Introspective Novel—something much different from the Victorian psychological novel—is characteristically the offspring of psychoanalysis. A number of new techniques came into vogue: the internal monologue (*Mrs. Dalloway*, *Those Barren Leaves*, *Point Counterpoint*): impressionism (*Orlando*, the Cave-episode in Forster's *A Passage to India*, the cave-scene in Rabindranath's *Chaturanga*); Surrealism—this technique is more prevalent in painting (Salvador Dali, Henry Moore, John Sutherland) and in Poetry (Vernon Watkins and Frederick Prokosch) than in the English Novel (Prokosch). The classic example of the slow-moving, close-up analysis of personality is to be found in Marcel Proust's famous *Swann's Way*. We have to recognize the fact that the old-fashioned objective novel of episode failed to satisfy the younger generation of writers. They had begun to wonder whether human nature could be simplified so artfully and artificially—whether you and I do act and think with logical deliberation, always following motives of which we can render an account. These writers wished to come closer to the objective reality of the mental process, to portray the interaction between thought, feeling and deed, as it actually is. Psychoanalysis came to their help; it created an interest not so much in the submerged and untraceable self as in the suppressed self, and the internal monologue was found to be a new and searching instrument. It is often not a monologue proper, but a one-party dialogue between two halves of the same person, each at variance with the other, the intelligence wrestling with circumstance, the impulses wrestling with the intelligence, the monologist only aware that his mind has lost its thread. In the internal monologue, author and reader each enjoy the luxury of being a spy. It is a potent technical device but we have to recognize, (1) that it is essentially not new—already in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, the subtlest battery of the device had been employed (cf. also the use of the device of inner debate in Bankim Chandra, the Elizabethan soliloquy, Eugene O'Neill's soliloquies); (2) and that, in the last analysis, we are no nearer the objective reality of the mind than we were before. After all, when you present a fiction, you present the mental processes of a character whom you have invented, your knowledge of those mental process has not the validity of a clinical examination, but bears the stamp of your own fancy. In that case, whether you follow the method of Hardy in giving an orderly

procession of the mind or you follow the method of Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf in presenting a jumbled-up stream of the mind, the mind of the character remains your own creation rather than an objective reality. A more suggestive technique is that of Impressionism which is related to Impressionistic painting but is naturally more dynamic than it and receives its impetus from Psycho-analysis. Here, the artist believes that all knowledge is subjective; we can have only my impression of a fact, your impression of it, his and hers and so on, it being not possible to have a completely detached knowledge of the fact itself. The importance of the personal factor in knowledge has been stressed in recent thought equally by Psychology and Mathematics. Consequently, the modern writer would describe an event or a place or object, not as the older writers did—in a properly-ordered flow—but as that event or place or object appears in different ways to different persons; the truth emerges from the total effect of the multiple impressions. The finest example of this method that I can remember occurs in Andre Malraux's *La Conditione Humaine*. This technique too, already conceived of and brilliantly worked out by Browning in *The Ring and the Book*, is perhaps more suitable to poetry than to the novel. T. S. Eliot's poetry furnishes several examples of Impressionism where experiences of different levels of significance are juxtaposed and telescoped together to produce an apparent feeling of nonsense and obscurity (but such is life) and a deeper sense of integrity. The devices of 'close-up', 'fade-out', 'flash-back' and montage with which the cinematograph has made us familiar, are the motion-pictorial adaptations of the psychoanalytic technique which have their counterparts in poetry and the novel as well.

Creative literature owes a debt to Psychoanalysis not in respect of technique alone but in respect of themes as well. I would draw your attention to four important themes: (1) the memory, (2) sex, (3) the sinister life, and (4) the infantile life, as well as the adolescent life. The value attached in Psychoanalysis to the memory is obvious: not the purposeful memory but the free, almost automatic, association of remembered impulses and incidents. Virginia Woolf's stories, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves*, have for their essential themes the stream of human consciousness. The classic example, however, is offered by Marcel Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (1922) which deeply influenced Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. The aesthetic result of this remembrance of things past is the importation of the much-needed element of poetry in modern literature. The excessive naturalism of the last century left the reader with a sense of dissatisfaction, for after all, in a work of imaginative art, we desire the glow of imagination; and the Proustian theme of memories of the past, linked and revived, involves a grand effort of the imagination. The manifold,

devious and profound mysteries of sex, so searchingly brought out in the thousand case-histories of the Freudians, stimulated writers to new descriptions and interpretations of love-life. D. H. Lawrence, who early came under the influence of Freud and even went to the extent of writing a monograph of his own entitled *The Fantasia of the Unconscious*, has explored sex-relations in the orthodox Freudian fashion in *Sons and Lovers* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In spite of Lawrence and John Cooper Powys, it would perhaps be true to say that the theory of the carnal lust as the primal motive of human behaviour has not had much representation in creative literature till much later (Henry Miller, Nabokov). The sinister and the bizarre as literary themes are as old as the Romantic Revival (*Wuthering Heights*, Gothic romances, *Frankenstein*); hallucination had already been portrayed by the powerful pen of Edgar Allan Poe, while in Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, we have a masterly treatment of the theme of split personality. But the sinister—to be differentiated from the mere crime fiction—has received a new impetus from Psychoanalysis. Andre Gide's *Les Caves du Vatican* goes far more searchingly into the mental state of a murderer than even Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, and that is because he has benefited by the findings of Psychoanalysis. In such novels as Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock*, Miss Compton-Burnet's *More Women than Men*, Arthur Koestler's *Death at Noon*, and F. L. Green's *Odd Man Out* (which has for its theme the hunted man) we have meticulous representations of the evil in man—not in a theological sense, though some of these writers are Catholics, but in the purely psychological—the evil in man comprising congenital criminality, habitual aberrations, and his susceptibility to the evil around him. It is the psychology of evil rather than the factual phenomenon of evil that dominates the modern novel and drama (cf. Eugene O'Neill) on a direct impetus from Psychoanalysis. The life of the infant, more so the life of the adolescent, has appealed to several modern writers, not in the sense that Blake and Wordsworth mysticized on the subject or Stevenson prattled baby-wise, but as containing within its microcosm the entire range of the adult's full-grown life. Mr. Henry Reed in *The Novel Since 1939* remarks "how often in the contemporary novel—not only in Britain—the theme of childhood recurs. Almost every important English writer of the moment has essayed to treat it. The reason is perhaps to be sought in the growing acceptance of the importance which is attached to childhood and infancy by psychology." One would name here such outstanding works on the theme as the following: Joyce Cary's *A House of Children*, L. P. Hartley's *The Shrimp and the Anemone*, Forrest Reid's *Young Tom*, Henry Green's *Loving*.

The theme of childhood allows me to link up Creative Literature

with the Critical. The technique of literary criticism has been immensely enriched by the knowledge of Psychoanalysis to insist on (i) the early life of the artist, and (ii) the significance of imagery. Since Freud and Adler have taught us that the germs of the adult life are to be found in the infantile and adolescent life, critics have more and more sought to discover the facts about their authors' early lives and to interpret their later conscious artistic works in terms of these early endeavours. And in many cases, the results have been illuminating. I refer to only a few cases out of a host. Consider Hugh I'Anson Fausset's work on Tennyson; the peculiar duality between the poet's delicate and lyrical mysticism on the one hand and his blatant submission to contemporary prudery on the other, has been explained in terms of the duality of his own early life—the inhibited atmosphere of a clergyman-father's household, repressing the boy's native visionary temper. Or, consider Herbert Read's analysis of Wordsworth or Stewart Walker Holmes's examination of Browning's *Sordello* or Malcolm Elwin's interpretation of R. L. Stevenson. An obvious shortcoming of this technique is that unless we have sufficient biographical data about the author, we cannot proceed with an analysis. Consequently, it is not possible to apply the technique to such older authors as Chaucer and Marlowe and Shakespeare, nor can we apply the technique to such authors about whose inner biography we are far from certain, e.g., Fielding, Tennyson, Shaw. The study of imagery is however much more fruitful. Already in the nineteenth century Coleridge in his lectures on Shakespeare had recognized in the image a valuable clue to the imaginative quality of the great dramatist. Indeed, even before him, Johnson and Whiter knew that metaphors and similes were not merely rhetorical devices but concrete vehicles of the imagination. But Freud's interpretation of dreams, Jung's emphasis on the recurrent symbol and his explanation of the nature of symbolism in general; Jung's theory of the archetypal patterns of human behaviour—all these have opened up new lines of literary criticism. To confine myself to Shakespearean criticism alone, more novel light has been thrown in our time on Shakespeare's imagination by studies of his imagery, recurring, clustered, and isolated, than by any other approach. Miss Spurgeon first showed the way by card-indexing all the images that occur in Shakespeare. She, however, did not succeed in coordinating or interpreting the images, and the field continues to be explored, in Edward A. Armstrong's *Shakespeare's Imagination*, and Clemen's, Wilson Knight's, Heilman's works. Miss Maud Bodkin in her *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*—in my opinion, one of the most brilliant books of literary criticism of this century—has followed the Jungian principles successfully to interpret Coleridge, Milton, Dante, *Othello*, and D. H. Lawrence. Other critics have sought to explain literary problems hitherto unsolved through the technique of psycho-

analysis. Dr. Ernest Jones, a noted Freudian and a doctor, wrote his essay on *Hamlet* about sixty years ago to prove that the answer to the question 'Why Hamlet delays to take revenge on his uncle?' can be found in the conception of the Oedipus Complex; that Hamlet's attitude to Claudius is divided between hate and love, hate and love being the simultaneous passions every man feels for the father or one who is in a parental relation. Recently, Mr. F. L. Lucas came out with his amendment to Dr. Jones that Hamlet's sudden paralysis is caused by the loss of a loved maternal ideal.

Having myself attempted some of these critical devices and closely studied the attempts of others, I am convinced that the validity and applicability of these devices are severely limited and no critic but he whose judgment and taste have been matured by practice in the traditional devices, should rush into the employment of psychiatric concepts and methods in the interpretation and assessment of art. You cannot interpret the psyche of an imagined personality (a Hamlet, for instance, or a Raskolnikoff) in an imagined situation (such as Emily Bronte's Catherine Heathcliff, Virginia Woolf's Mrs Ramsay and James Joyce's Leopold Bloom find themselves in) in terms of the objective reality. Such interpretation would be guilty of the terrific naturalistic fallacy of equating life and art, thus denying to art its unique, creative and sovereign quality of Imagination.

Of the many other aspects of the infiltration of psychology into literature, I can mention here—merely mention them—two. One is related to Freud's theory of wit, laughter, the comic, a theory that by taking into account the psychological genesis as well as the consequence of the comic, is far more convincing than the metaphysical theories that have been current for centuries. The other aspect of the incursion of psychology into literature also derive from Freud: this is the concept of art as fantasy, as a play of the unconscious, as wish-fulfilment, E. M. W. Tillyard's distinction between conscious intent and unconscious self-exposure in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a deft application of this theory to art; John Livingstone Lowes's *Road to Xanadu* is a brilliant close-up examination of the amazing link in the unconscious between Coleridge's imagery and his vast and eclectic reading. Nevertheless, playing up the unconscious element of art may mean losing sight of the very important fact that art, by and large, is a singularly conscious activity. It may be that, as the Roman said, *poeta nascitur*, but surely it is also an inescapable fact that *poeta fit*, and this process of 'making' (in the sense of the Greeks, Horace, and the medieval Scots) is firmly rooted in the artist's conscious behaviour.*

* From the short-hand notes of an *ex tempore* extension lecture delivered in the Faculty of Arts of the Aligarh University.

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BRIGHT STAR : AN ATTEMPT AT INTEGRATION

SISIR KUMAR DAS

THE date of the *Bright Star* sonnet has not been finally ascertained. Sidney Colvin suggested the third week of September, 1819¹ because of a heavy snowfall which he thought might have suggested the lines

Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask

Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—

Lowell argued² for mid-April from Keats's letters in which occur phrases that are echoed in the sonnet. Gittings followed Lowell in assuming that Keats had just been looking at his letter of June 26, 1818, but pushed the date to late October³ suggesting that its final revised version was in Fanny Brawne's hands by the following April, 1819.⁴ Bate rejects the argument of Gittings⁵; nor does he accept the arguments of Selincourt and Aileen Ward⁶ for July, 1819. Parallels between phrases in a poem and letters, he observes, are never an effective argument for determining the date, particularly for Keats who frequently anticipates phrases in the poems by several months (e.g. the letters describing his Scottish tour contain many phrases that are echoed in *Grecian Urn* and *Nightingale*). He suggests either early 1819 or the winter of 1819.

But whatever may be the exact date there is no doubt that the *Bright Star* sonnet has something to do with a woman. Gittings has made the interesting suggestion that the sonnet may have something to do with Keats's meeting with Isabella Jones at the end of October, 1818.⁷ It seems, however, equally probable that the sonnet may not have been addressed to any particular person. It may have been just an attempt at summing up the conflicting thoughts that disturbed the poet's mind; for at that time the rival claims of life and love obsessed his mind.

Indeed, the *Bright Star* is a poem which crystallizes the whole of Keats's poetic life. It balances admirably the opposing tendencies within him. The contrast between the timeless perfection of art and the time-bound realizations of life is repeated in this sonnet with greater urgency and passion and ultimately they are pushed towards a synthesis, an eternal calm within sensuality, the ideal in the actual.

Endymion addresses his unknown beloved:

O known unknown! from whom my being sips
Such darling essence, wherefore may I not
Be ever in these arms? in this sweet spot
Pillow my chin for ever? ever press
These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess?
Why not for ever and for ever feel
That breath about my eyes? (Endymion, II, 739-745)

Every reader of Keats's *Bright Star* sonnet may see its prototype in these lines; the same duality of mortal desire seeking immortal fulfilment informs them. The suggestion of *Endymion* that human love is the chief intensity is re-emphasized. *Bright Star* reminds us also of the structure of the two great odes—*Nightingale* and *Grecian Urn*, whether the sonnet was written as an echo or an anticipation. The octet corresponds to the spirit of the *Nightingale* ode, the sestet to that of *Psyche*. But the whole is a richer embodiment of that motion within the desired serenity that characterizes the eternity of *Grecian Urn*. The sonnet offers us a dominant symbol which after being postulated at the beginning, becomes the motif in a counterpoint of withdrawal or partial return. This is precisely what the bright star stands for in Keats's sonnet.

Wordsworth's lines

Chaldean Shepherds, ranging trackless fields,
Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
Looked on the polar star, as on a guide
And guardian of their course, that never closed
His steadfast eye. (The Excursion, IV, 694-699)

have been adduced as "the source of Keats's recurrent image of the star."⁸ It seems to me that such a generalization denies Keats originality. Keats's genius had a closer affinity with that of Shakespeare. The image of

the northern star
Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament
(Julius Caesar, III.i.60-62)

may just as well have influenced Keats. The idea of the starlit dome disdaining

All that man is,
All mere complexities,
The fury and mire of human veins

(Byzantium, 6-8)

is a common image in poetry. Keats's image, therefore, need not be looked upon as derived.

To Keats stars always symbolize eternity in so far as they suggest everlasting stillness and wakefulness. The "sapphire-region'd star"⁹ is a metaphor of permanence in Keats's poetry. Things that are 'mysterious' and 'immortal' are 'starry' in Keats.¹⁰ He regards the star as traditionally associated with repose and order:

Point me out the way
To any one particular beauteous star,
And I will flit into it with the lyre
And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.

(*Hyperion*, III, 99-102)

The star in Keats also indicates a taut stasis:

She began to sing,
Happy in beauty, life, and love, and everything,
A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres.
While like held breath, the stars drew in their panting fires.

(*Lamia*, I, 297-300)

In *The Eve of St. Agnes* Porphyro at the crest of surging feeling is lifted above the human situation:

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he rose
Ethereal, flush'd and like a throbbing star
Seen amid the sapphire heaven's deep repose. (stz. XXVI)

The sonnet *Bright Star* begins like a prayer. From the very beginning religious fervour dominates the structure of the images. The star is eternal and sleepless just as the poet would like to be. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished; only he would not shuffle off his mortal coil. It is shining in "lonè splendour" and is an eremite, an astral eremite. G. Wilson Knight has drawn our attention to the use of hermits in relation to love in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Pericles*, *The Ancient Mariner* and *The Revolt of Islam*.¹¹ The eremite here does not experience "the fury and mire of human veins"; the suggestion is emphatically that of a withdrawal for religious purposes. It also suggests everlasting stillness and vigilance ("with eternal lids apart"). It watches the sea in its priestlike task

Of pure ablution round earth's human shores.

"Priestlike" and "ablution" have sacramental associations. The dead earth is restored into a new life, water being a more dynamic and holier element to the imagination than the rock. The star also watches the snow which like the sea seems to purify or at least hide the ugliness of the earth. In its act of watching it is part of an order of cold, chaste and eternal things such as the sea, snow and mountains. This order is felt to be indifferent or even unresponsive to earthly things which it seeks to purge or conceal. But this is not

wholly so. The soft-fallen mask of snow, besides having associations of purity, denotes that the earth is as a human body and the mountains and moors delicately correspond to the "ripening breast" of the poet's love. And from its astral altitude the star looks down upon a distant planetary body, distinguished from other cosmic bodies by the moving waters upon its surface. The epithet "human shores" serves as a link between the region in space and the consciousness of the poet which connects them. The rhythms of moving waters, of stars in their courses, of the seasonal fall of snow, and of the heart-beat of the beloved are effectively brought together into a single intimate relationship. The verse enacts the meaning and the octet is, in this manner, rendered at once lustrous, profane and sacred, with its interplay of movement and stillness, liquid and solid.

The sestet describes an intimate human situation, apparently very incongruous with the symbolic image of the star. Yet within this framework of cosmic vastness is set the human warmth suggested by words like "ripening", "pillowed" and "soft". This reminds one of the paradoxical interanimation of ideas so frequent in Keats. The poet will be wakeful like a star; but it will be a waking sleep, a living swoon. There is the same rhythmic balance in each item. The lines

Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,

To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,

recall the "moving waters" and have a sleep-inducing rhythm; but the poet will remain awake for ever in his "sweet unrest". The culminating image blends all under the coalescing concept of everlasting life or swooning death. The basic antinomy of death as "life's high meed"¹² runs throughout Keats's poetry and gives it a special richness and depth. The opposites of rising and falling, unrest and steadfastness, chastity and sensuality, life and death are resolved quietly. There is no real dichotomy; the breathing human passion counts more for the poet than the lone splendour of the star. The divine is sought to be realized in the human, and the ideal in the actual. And the images graph the tension of forces neatly. The organization of the poem is quite subtle. Keats uses parallels ('moving waters' and 'ripening breast') and opposites (chastity and sensuality) cleverly to produce the effect of a harmonious whole.

H. W. Garrod, however, has discerned in Keats's poetry "the shadow of a living woman"; and "it falls calamitously like an eclipse". He writes:

The so-called Last Sonnet is, no doubt, all that it has been felt to be by lovers of Keats's poetry; and it seems wanton to say the whole truth about it. Yet the oftener I read it, the more does the contrast force itself upon my attention between

the lofty, the almost heroic, gravity of its opening lines, and the inferior effects in which it closes.¹³

This view has been shared by others. Blackstone says:

... the poem is, to my mind a failure. It attempts to reconcile two species of beauty—the formal and the vital—but without success. Steadfastness belongs to the formal, the intellectual beauty: to the star or the urn; but not to the vital beauty, the beauty of phases... In the sonnet the formal is set apart from the vital: the star remains aloft, the poet and his love below. The poet's aspiration to share the star's impassibility is at once negated by his desire for another kind of beauty. Both desires are frustrated: the poem ends with death. It does so because it has left the body of divine analogy: it has proposed a set of contraries which are unreconcilable.¹⁴

Aileen Ward comments:

Yet things fall apart as the sonnet moves towards the end. The delicate links by which Keats tried to bind the star and the lover, each in his own rapt contemplation, are snapped in the final plunge toward unconsciousness. His fair love's breast, as white and soft as new-fallen snow, rising and falling like the sea, holds only an illusion of calm... In the sestet of the sonnet the human observer reappears, and at this the disinterested vision falters. The object it contemplates, the breathing body of the beloved woman, is the one in all the world most inimical to the vision.¹⁵

Harold Bloom also seems to suggest the same thing; the poem has failed because "passion informs it throughout".¹⁶

It appears that the so-called disastrous collapse at the end is due to the fact that Keats failed to control the passion and the critics have sensed an indelicacy in the image of the "fair love's ripening breast", this being the "most inimical to vision."

But such images are insistent in Keats's poetry. In the concluding lines of *Fancy* Keats deftly undresses Hebe before the Olympian Jove:

With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone
Slipt its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid.

(11.84-89)

Keats shows us Madeline's "balmy side" (stanza XXIII) and the wintry moon throwing "warm gules" on her "fair breast" (stanza XXV) and then he proceeds to show her in her act of undressing:

her vespers done

Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;

Uncclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;

Loosens her fragrant bodice ; by degrees

Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees: (stanza XXVI)

Similar examples may be multiplied. Images from suckling illustrate his most abstract conceptions. For instance we may refer to Keats's letter 123 :

Not merely is the Heart a Hornbook. It is the Minds Bible, it is the Minds experience, it is the teat from which the Mind or intelligence sucks its identity.¹⁷

This is an image which has to be accepted as existing within his organic context of growth and fruition. This need not be looked upon as distasteful. To Keats such images suggested themselves with the utmost naturalness as they did to Erasmus Darwin. The following passage from *Zoonomia* shows how natural the reference to the human breast can be

All these various kinds of pleasure at length become associated with the form of the mother's breast ; which the infant embraces with its hands, presses with its lips, and watches with its eyes ; and thus acquires more accurate ideas of the form of its mother's bosom, than of the odour and flavour or warmth, which it perceives by its other senses. And hence at our maturer years, when any object of vision presented to us, which by its waving and spiral lines bears any similitude to the form of the female bosom, whether it be found in a landscape with soft gradations of rising and descending surface, or in the forms of some antique vases, or in other works of the pencil or the chissel (sic), we feel a general glow of delight, which seems to influence all our senses ; and if the object be not too large, we experience an attraction to embrace it with our arms, and to salute it with our lips, as we did in our early infancy the bosom of our mother. And thus we find, according to the ingenious idea of Hogarth, that the waving lines of beauty were originally taken from the temple of Venus.¹⁸

The breast of the beloved, Darwin seems to suggest, is warm and intimate, at once profane and devout. Keats's image "ripening breast" need not, therefore, be looked upon merely as a luxurious, voluptuous and profane image. It is a tactile image as characteristic of Keats as the images like "globed peonies", "plump ... hazel shells" and "creamy breast" are. They do not always express the voluptuary's desire for physical contact. They rather imply a strong grasp upon actualities. There is no afflatus here ; nor is there generous emotionality that mars the firm sense of the concrete. In the original

version of the poem Keats had written "Cheek-pillowed on my fair love's white ripening breast." The revised version significantly avoids the epithets "cheek-pillowed" and "white" and thereby attains a refinement of the rank sensuousness of the original. In the sonnet to Fanny beginning with "I cry your mercy" the image of the "warm, white, lucent, million-pleasured breast" has a hectic passion about it. In the *Bright Star* sonnet the breast would be for ever ripening, never ripe. This mature linguistic vitality is reminiscent of

For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd

For ever panting and for ever young. (*Grecian Urn*, 26-27)

Even if the epithets like "creamy breast" and "ripening breast" strike one as voluptuous one need not shun them as morally reprehensible. Robin Mayhead points out that "some of the most magnificent poetry in existence is gorgeously voluptuous". Moreover, voluptuousness in Keats is "curiously ambiguous" for in Keats it has a tendency to culminate in swooning or at any rate it involves a turning away from what is sharply perceived.¹⁹ In Keats, as in all great poetry, the end of the metaphor is not acute visual clarity, nor is it merely an intense sensory clarity.

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair ;

Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and creamy breast:

Are things on which the dazzled senses rest

Till the fond, fixed eyes forget they stare.

(*Woman! when I behold thee flippant, vain*, 15-18.)

In Keats's poetry once the visual and tactile senses are engaged several other senses are roused to a tenebrous activity which precludes both the static character of what is merely seen and felt and the unmuscularity of what is merely thought. The eyes forget they stare.

Thus it might be argued that by means of sublime correspondences feelings of religious purity associated with the star are driven into the sestet and the eroticism has been sublimated. The steadfastness of the star has been transferred into the most piercing of the poet's longing for an earthly paradise. The octet is an anagoge of the sestet. There is no real dichotomy involved. The abyss of human felicity is coterminus with the serenity of starry heavens. The journey homeward is a passage through the spatial world.

It has been suggested that Keats was a kind of Tantalus reaching for the apples of the Hesperides²⁰; and all his major poems celebrate "immediate sensation being intensified by the ideal of a postmortal elysium in which earthly happiness is repeated in a finer tone."²¹ The *Bright Star* sonnet is an emphatic statement of this creed. It is one of the loveliest poems in English literature and certainly the best of Keats's sonnets.

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SIR HERBERT READ

SASI BHUSAN DAS

THE death of Sir Herbert Read on 12 June, 1968 within a year of Siegfried Sassoon's has removed from the world another distinguished poet of the First World War reducing the number of the poets who survived it to a very limited few, of which Mr. Edmund Blunden is of course one.

Sir Herbert was born in 1893 i.e. the year in which Wilfred Owen, the greatest of the war poets, was born. But he survived Owen, who was killed in the war in 1918, just by half a century and died in his seventyfifth year full of honours that any literary man would covet. Like Owen, Herbert Read was born in an obscure family, and was the son of a farmer in Yorkshire. Like Owen again, Herbert Read fought in the First World War for three years as an Infantry Officer and won the Military Cross in 1917 and the D.S.O. in 1918. Shortly before his death Owen also had won the Military Cross in 1918. But Herbert Read, who had a much longer lease of life, was knighted in 1953.

Most relevant to our discussion is the fact that Herbert Read like Owen and few others (Sassoon, Robert Graves, Robert Nichols, Osbert Sitwell, and Isaac Rosenberg) held the same realistic view about the War and exploded in his poetry the myth of the romantic idealism of the soldier of which in the initial phase of the War Rupert Brooke was the most powerful exponent.

Herbert Read and the poets mentioned above wrote a new kind of poetry about the War which was not war poetry so much as anti-war poetry. The brutal truth of the War behind the poetic abstractions is pictured by Herbert Read in his well known anthology piece *Happy Warrior* written in imitation of Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior* but altogether in a different vein:

His wild heart beats with painful sobs,
His strained hands clench as ice-cold rifle,
His aching jaws grip a hot parched tongue,
His wide eyes search unconsciously.

He cannot shriek.
Bloody saliva
Dribbles down his shapeless jacket.

I saw him stab
 And stab again
 A well-killed Boche.
 This the happy warrior,
 This is he

Much of Read's best poetry had nothing to do with the War, yet it is by his war poetry that he achieved his first distinction as a poet.

Not only this. His experience of and attitude to the War were the determining factors in the shaping of his genius, both creative and critical. Herbert Read's was a versatile genius the activity of which covered many fields—poetry, literary criticism, criticism of arts (fine and plastic), of society and of politics. Poetical works include *Naked Warriors* (1919), *Mutations of the Phoenix* (1923) and *A World within a War* (1945). The latest edition of his *Collected Poems* was published in 1966. Critical works include *Phases of English Poetry* (1928), *English Prose Style* (1928), *Form in Modern Poetry* (1932), *Art Now* (1933), *Art and Society* (1937), *Wordsworth* (1930), *Coleridge as a Critic* (1949), *Byron* (1951), *The True Voice of Feeling* (1953), etc. Read's essays include *Reason and Romanticism* (1926), *The Sense of Glory* (1929), *In Defence of Shelley* (1936), and *A Coat of Many Colours* (1945). *The Green Child* (1935), is his solitary novel and *Annals of Innocence and experience* (including *The Innocent Eye* 1933, *In Retreat* 1925, and *Ambush* 1946) is Read's autobiographical account in prose.

Herbert Read's war poetry is most remarkable for its realistic pictures of the horror of the War. What makes the poem *Happy Warrior* (quoted above) remarkable is concentration on the image of the horror of the war. This is due to the influence on Herbert Read of the Imagist school of poets formed in 1913 by some Americans. Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, and Hilda Doolittle. The imagist technique demanded above all concentration on the image. Herbert Read employed this technique in a number of his war poems.

In *Kneeshaw Goes to War*, Kneeshaw's attitude to the War was, like most of his fellow soldiers', a kind of romantic adventure into the unknown. It need hardly be said that Kneeshaw's attitude to war was in fact Herbert Read's own in the initial phase of the War. The War for Kneeshaw stood as a symbol of a world in which he could realise his youthful dreams and from the strange land of the War he hoped to return 'laden with strange merchandise'. But soon his illusions were broken:

Kneeshaw felt himself
 A cog in some evil engine
 ...into the black terror.

The reality of the war begins to reveal itself to him. He sees a comrade sink in the mud and when his other comrades fail to drag him

out, 'an officer shot him through the head':
He clutched and they tugged,
But slowly he sank.
His terror grew—
Grew visibly when the viscous ooze
Reached his neck.
And there he seemed to stick,
Sinking no more.
They could not dig him out—
The oozing mud would flow back again.

The dawn was very near,
An officer shot him through the head:

Referring to the above passage, Mr. Maurice Hussey observes:

"Nowhere in the literature of the war is the horror of campaigning through the mud in Flanders more dramatically caught in words."¹

In the same passage from which the above extract is taken Mr. Hussey says:

"Very close in spirit to Sassoon's is some of the poetry of Herbert Read. He conveys the close paternalistic relations of officer to his men in *My Company*. He also sounds a vein of dark satire."²

Soon Kneeshaw loses a leg in an accidental explosion of a bomb while digging the earth and is invalided home. From now on, on crutches

He stalked the woods and hills of his native land

And on the hills he would sing this war song.

And this war song was of course related to his own career as a soldier from the time he enlisted in the army with romantic dreams to the time of his being invalided home with the loss of a leg, and the song ends with Kneeshaw's desire to speak the truth of the war as he realised it in the fighting line. 'To tell the truth about war' was, as we know, Owen's own desire which he expressed in his poetry as also in his well known *Preface*. That Read shared Owen's attitude to war is further confirmed by his quotation of two sentences from Owen's *Preface* in an essay *The Failure of the War Books* which was written during the Second World War and published in his *A Coat of Many Colours* (1945):

"Young writers who took part in the last war (the First World War) came back with one desire: to tell the truth about war, to expose its horrors, its inhumanity, its indignity. They knew that it was no good crying over spilt blood, no good trying to console themselves or their contemporaries. But at least they might warm the coming generations. 'All a poet can do to-day

is warn,' wrote Wilfred Owen. 'That is why the true Poets must be truthful'.³

It should be noted that the whole of the passage quoted above was inspired by Owen's *Preface* from which the two sentences are quoted. In fact when he wrote the essay he had in mind the war literature particularly the poetry of Owen and the well known novel of Remarque as is apparent from the following observations in the same essay:

"Remarque, like Owen, wanted to warn the new generation. He did warn them; so did the film which was based on his book. So did scores of books that floated to success on the tide of *All Quiet*, which itself quickly became the best-selling novel of our time."⁴

Kneeshaw Goes to War appears in the collection of poems, *Naked Warriors*, which was published in 1919 i.e. a year after the death of Wilfred Owen. It is interesting to observe that there is some similarity between this poem and Wilfred Owen's *Disabled*. Both poems deal with a young recruit's romantic illusions of the war when he enlists in the army and in both the soldier loses either one of his legs or both (Read's Kneeshaw loses one leg and Owen's unnamed soldier loses both), and returns home as an invalid with his romantic dreams completely shattered. But whereas Read concentrates on the gruesome detail of the horror of the war, Owen concentrates on the pathos of the situation, pushing its horrible side to the background. It is this 'pity of war', which is central to Owen's poetry, that makes Owen's poem move a reader in a manner in which Read's poem cannot because of its emphasis on the horror of the war.

The question of Owen's poem being influenced by Read's does not arise. Owen's *Disabled* was written much earlier than in July or August 1918 and first published, posthumously in 1919, in the fourth cycle of *Wheels* edited by Edith Sitwell.⁵ Herbert Read may have written the poem independently, though the possibility of the influence of Owen's poem on Read's *Kneeshaw Goes to War* cannot be wholly ruled out. For we shall see later that in some of the war poems which Herbert Read had written years after the First World War, something of the spirit of Owen's poetry was recaptured.

The Execution of Cornelius Vane is a narrative poem dealing with the story of an unheroic soldier who on a charge of desertion was shot dead by a court martial. Lucidity of style and simplicity and directness of expression constitute the main features of the poem. Throughout the narrative is interspersed Herbert Read's feeling for the beauties of Nature.

To escape fighting the soldier shot away his right index finger when alone on sentry duty. But he was made to cook for the company to which he belonged. So he peels potatoes when other men do the

fighting. But this peaceful life in the ~~army~~ kitchen was not to continue for long. When the enemy broke through the line he was asked to fight along with the rest of the camp followers. He held out his fingerless hand and said that he could not fight. 'But you can stab' was the sharp retort. When he came near the fighting line, the sight of the flight of the bullets and of the bursting of shells around him frightened him so much that he ran for life to the open fields before him till at last he reached a wood in which he slept for the night. He may have deserted his comrades, but his love of life and of Nature never deserted him even in his flight :

He was still running when he began to perceive
The tranquillity of the fields
And the battle distant.

Away in the north-east were men marching on the road ;
Behind were the smoke ... in a sky of limpid gold.

Next morning he resumes his journey of flight, crossed a canal and took shelter in a deserted house and refreshed himself by the mouldy bread and wine left by its inmates. While eating, he suddenly heard in the neighbourhood the sounds of the machine-gun fire and his soul shivered with fear. Instantaneously he took to his heels. Behind him was the fear of death and before him was the lure of the beauties of Nature. So he ran on and on for life :

The sun was more golden now the green dusk.
'Two days later he entered a village and was arrested.' He was tried and sentenced to death by a court martial. He said nothing in self-defence, only a dumb anger and a despair filled his soul. But even at the moment of being shot he asserted his love of the beauties of Nature from which he was being unjustly and permanently cut off by death. He does not complain why he should be killed ; but instead he makes the pathetic query—what wrong has he done that he should have to leave these?

The bright sun rising...
And the birds that sing.

The Execution of Cornelius Vane is a narrative poem of crystalline beauty. Concerned with the First World War the poem is free from the realism of the horror of the war which characterises so much of his poetry of the First War ; it is also free from the metaphysical thought which characterises much of his later war verse. Realism of war is subordinated to pathos and stress is laid, as in Owen's poetry, on the value of life and its gifts. On the other hand, in this poem Herbert Read gives a realistic picture of the psychology of a common soldier—a picture which gives the lie direct to the romantic picture of the heroic soldier as painted by the bardic type of poets for generations before the First World War. Cornelius may

be an unheroic soldier, but there is nothing uncommon or unnatural about his psychology. In fact, his psychology represents that of a common soldier who, like him, does not want war, does not want to get killed in the war and who, similarly, would like to get out of it—if he could help it—by any means, desertion or self-inflicted wounds. This aspect of a common soldier's psychology has been dealt with by Owen and Siegfried Sassoon (Cf. Owen's *S.I.W.* and Sassoon's *Suicide in Trenches*).

Into the texture of the poem is finely woven an intense feeling for Nature in a manner which reminds us of a similar treatment of Nature by Owen in some of his poetry especially in his *Spring Offensive*. The story of Cornelius from his flight to his execution is set against a background of the beauties of Nature which constitute part and parcel of Cornelius's life and with which he is most reluctant to part. Owen's *Spring Offensive* also has for its backdrop the beauties of Nature in spring which Owen's soldiers before their actual offensive regaled their eyes with and 'whose bounty' most reluctantly 'these have spurned'. The technical aspect of the poem also deserves a mention. Herbert Read has not followed the Georgian tradition in the construction of the verse. The stanzas lack uniformity of construction and are composed of varying number of unrhymed lines of varying lengths.

The fellowship that was formed among the soldiers in the fighting line had been the source of many a fine poem of the First War. The finest example is Owen's *Greater Love*. Other remarkable poems dealing with this theme of fellowship are Blunden's *Their Very Memory*, Sassoon's *To any Dead Officer* and *Sick Leave*, E. A. Mackintosh's *In Memoriam*, and Robert Graves's *Two Fusiliers*. Herbert Read's *My Company* and behind it a similar inspiration. In this poem Read 'conveys,' as Mr Hussey puts it, 'the close paternalistic relations between officer and his men.'⁶ But it is something more than this. It is the expression of that feeling which transcends the barrier between an officer and his men and ties them together in the fighting line 'by the wet bond of blood' or, to use Owen's words, 'with the bandage of the arm that drips.'

The poet says that he cannot exactly remember when he came to identify himself with the soldiers in the company under his command, but what he remembers is that he loved them and they loved him. Their love was so complete that the whole company became 'a body and a soul entire':

... We've fought together

Compact, unanimous ;

And I have felt the pride of leadership.

Many of the soldiers of the company of which the poet was the com-

mander will no doubt fall in the war someday creating a great void in his soul. On that day his soul will cry out in profound sympathy for the comrades that are no more:

Someday in the loneliest wilderness,
 Someday my heart will cry.
 For the soul that has been, but that now
 Is scattered with the winds,
 Deceased and devoid.
 I know that I'll wander with a cry:
 'O beautiful men, O men I loved,
 O whither are you gone, my company?'

The feeling of love and solidarity which binds the poet as a soldier with his fellow soldiers as expressed in the first part of the poem has been exquisitely expressed by Owen in his *Greater Love*:

Red lips are not so red in my stead.

The same part is also reminiscent of Owen's *Apologia* especially of its last six stanzas beginning "And witnessed exultation—etc."

The second part of the poem is conceived in the vein of Sassoon's *The Redeemer* and reflects something of the sentiment of the latter poem. Herbert Read, like Sassoon, calls his men 'modern Christs':

My men, my modern Christs,
 Your bloody agony confronts the world.

In the fewest possible words and right in the manner of the Imagists, Herbert Read, in the third part of his *My Company*, provides a realistic picture of the horror of the war as the dead body of the soldier killed in the war keeps dangling on the barbed wire in the No-Man's-Land:

A man of mine lies on the wire;
 And he will rot
 And first his lips
 The worms will eat.
 It is not thus I would have him kissed,
 But with the warm passionate lips
 Of his comrade here.

In sharp contrast with this stark realism is a vision which Read conveys in the last (4th) part of his poem. The vision is the actual conflict of his men with the enemies lifted on to an imaginative plane and transformed into a clash of clouds of birds in the sky. We can see that the vision has something of the quality of Owen's *The Show*. This visionary quality is rare in Read's war poetry and appears with exquisite effects in one of his last poems about the Second World War entitled 1945. What probably Herbert Read means in the last stanza is that while actually leading his men in the fighting line, he has to put his sympathy for his men out of court and 'assume a giant attitude and godlike mood' if he is to view the actual fighting 'detachedly'.

In that vision

The men I've lived with
Lurch suddenly into a far perspective ;
They distantly gather like a dark cloud of birds.
In the autumn sky.
Urged by some unanimous
Volition or fate,
Clouds clash in opposition ;
The sky quivers, the dead descend ;
Earth yawns

The vision over, the poet swings back to reality:

Then again I assume/My human docility,
Bow my head/And share their doom.

Towards the end of *My Company* occurs the following passage:

From my giant attitude,
In godlike mood,
I laugh till space is filled
With hellish merriment.

It is not difficult to see that the passage represents the refined form of the attitude of insensibility of which Owen speaks in his *Insensibility* and which enabled his soldiers to stand their ordeal in the battlefield and 'laugh with the dying unconcerned'. The last lines of the poem—'Bow my head/And share their doom' appear to be an echo of the concluding lines of Owen's *The Show*:

And Death fell with me, like a deepening moan.

....

Showed me its feet, the feet of many men,
And the fresh-severed head of it, my head.

The poem is not without its technical interest. The stanzaic form of verse is rejected and so are rejected the traditional metre, rhyme and rhythm. The lines of the different parts of the poem are of unequal-lengths. But the lines of Read's verse have a rhythm of their own which follows the movement of thought. The verse pattern also varies from part to part—a technique which T. S. Eliot has used in his poetry in a masterly fashion. It may be noted here that in his later verse Herbert Read has made greater technical experiments.

The realism of Herbert Read's war poetry should be remarked upon here. His realistic pictures of the horror of the war have no doubt a considerable documentary value and are remarkable for their force of immediacy of appeal. And there is no doubt that they made great impact on the minds of the people of the time when they were presented before the public. But in the long run they failed to impress the readers who developed an immunity to them and even began to dislike them. Far less could such realism rise to the level of high

poetry in which the realism is always transmuted by the poet's creative imagination. The limitation of Herbert Read's realism is apparent in the poems which are based on direct impressions of the war. But he was able to give better poetry when he recreated his reminiscences of the war in terms of imaginative experience years after the event.

Of the limitations of the realism in his war poetry Herbert Read was quite aware as his observations, made during the second World War, on the popularity of his *The Happy Warrior* will show:

"I have myself been struck by the fact that one and only one of my war poems has been extensively quoted in anthologies and reviews—a simple but very bitter and horrible poem called *The Happy Warrior*. From a literary point of view I am sure it is by no means the best of my war poems, but it has had a terrible fascination for many people. It expresses in an extreme degree the horror of war, and it, and other poems and stories of the same kind, should have been an effective warning. As it is, the suspicion now grows upon me that such writing was fuel to the inner flames of the war spirit."

It has been said that Herbert Read had written some of his best poetry about the War years after the event. In the poems of this second group Read has grown cynical and metaphysical.

One of his most remarkable poems concerned with the First World War, but written long after the event, is *The End of a War*. The poem is based on a situation which occurred on the 10th of November, 1918, but the poem was written in 1931-2 and published in 1933. The poem is prefaced by an argument in prose of the incident and is followed by an explanatory note on his purpose for doing so. In this note he refers to the incident and declares: "But its horrors do not accuse any particular nation..." The incident on which the poem is based is not incorporated in the poem but narrated in the preface and is as follows: Misled by the false information given by a wounded German officer a British battalion happened to be in a place in front of a church of a French village. A party of the German machine-gunners who lay ambushed in the tower of the church opened fire on the British battalion and inflicted very heavy casualties on it. The survivors routed out and destroyed the enemy, while one of its corporals killed the German officer who betrayed them.

The incident gives Read an occasion for his metaphysical speculations on the motives of different people for their participation in the War. The poem has three parts of which the first deals with the "Meditation of the Dying German Officer", the second with the "Dialogue between the Body and the Soul" of a French girl who was murdered by the Germans, and the third with the "Meditation of the

Waking English Officer"—waking next morning to the sound of the bells from the church proclaiming armistice.

It appears from the reflection of the dying German Officer that it is not out of any religious motive that he fights and dies, but for certain values such as Emperor, Flag, and Empire in which he has his implicit faith. But as regards his death he leaves it to his fate: "I die, but death was destined." Death for him as non-believer is a kind of dissolution into 'nothing'—*so finite/so small/Nichts*. On the elaboration of this motive Read has bestowed as many as one hundred and thirty two or so lines—a proof of the diffusive character of the style in which the poem has been written.

The second part which deals with the dialogue between the Body and the Soul of the murdered French girl introduces other motives such as martyrdom and patriotism. The Body claims that it was murdered for the sake of France and Christianity. Apart from the patriotic feeling which inspired many soldiers in the initial phase of the War, there was also a sense of martyrdom at work in their minds in the sense that they were fighting for the righteousness of their cause, for truth and justice; their death in the War, therefore, was invested with the halo of martyrdom similar to that of Christ. The Soul, however, comes with a different version of the tale. It declares that many innocent people have been killed in the War though they had no cause to fight for; they were none the less martyrs for that. The Body replies that such people leave themselves to their fate and "die thinking the face of God not love but hate." The Soul's concluding reply :

"Those who die for a cause die comforted and coy

Believing their cause God's cause they die with joy."

In this dialogue, it will be observed, the different motives and feelings at work behind the War are laid bare and not debated.

The third part, which deals with the reflection of the Working English Officer, discloses him waking on the following morning only to discover, to his surprise, that he is alive and to realise from the sound of the church bells that armistice has been declared and peace has come.

Though a non-believer, the German Officer accepts certain values—Flag, Fatherland, and Emperor—for which he fights. But the English Officer has no cause to fight for:

I answered no call

there was no cause to answer

The English Officer vividly describes his initial reaction to the War after his, as he calls it, 'wild plunge' into it. The war is described in terms of the elemental image of the storm in the whirlpool of which he was like a helpless twig driven to and fro:

Listless

I felt the storm about me..... inmost coil.

In the weariness and boredom of a long night watch on the enemy line he is given to reflection on his 'life's inconstant drift'. Before his reflection the reality of God, hatred, love, and the human heart vanishes. Even life itself becomes a fine form of matter, a 'ridge between eternal death and life eternal, a moment of time temporal'. The life of an individual is, therefore, nothing in comparison with the infinite which is the ultimate reality. So he welcomes death from the enemy at that very moment. At the beginning of the War his resolve was to fight for the 'rights of men', and when the War was over and peace was restored, to fight for 'will and justice'. But that was before he faced death every moment in the battlefield and hope turned into the bitterness of despair. In this mood of despair born out of his bitter experience of the War he comes to lose his faith in God and to rely on a "mechanic force" governing the world and its acts and leading man back to his original state of barbarism and animal existence. The other alternative that presents itself to his thought is that 'we act God's purpose in an obscure way'. On this second possibility even evil may have a meaning, and in its obscure way, chasten and purify us; if may be a 'fire to burn our dross to temper us, to finer stock'. On this assumption of God as God of love he would join with the peasants in the prayer to God for the peace that has come.

It should be observed that what concerns Herbert Read most in the poem is the metaphysical aspects of the incident and not the incident itself which is deliberately kept out of the poem. Mr. Francis Berry has rightly observed: "Evidently, for the poet's purpose, it was the metaphysical, and not the narrative, possibilities that counted."² This art of Read's is to be sharply contrasted with that of any other war poet, particularly Owen, who would have concentrated, in a similar situation, on the incident or the situation and kept the metaphysical speculations out of the poem. Owen, for instance, would have dealt with the situation in a manner so as to bring out the pathos inherent in it and kept 'metaphysics' either entirely out of the poem or left it for the readers to draw it out. For this we need only to refer to his *Disabled* where similar motives of a soldier are mentioned. In that poem, it will be observed, prominence is given not to the motives themselves, but to the pathos involved in the situation. To quote again Mr. Berry: "The poem takes for granted what other writers might have developed, and instead concentrates on the problems of value, belief, and doubt emergent from the situation—problems which are not formally debated, but which are subjected to a variety of possible attitudes."³

It will be further observed that the metaphysical speculations do not naturally grow out of the situation on which they are based. On the other hand, one has the suspicion that the situation which is assumed

in the poem is a mere pretext for Read to indulge in the metaphysical discussion. This cleavage between the situation and philosophy accounts for the failure of the poem as a poetry or even as metaphysical poetry. In short, in this poem the metaphysician in Herbert Read has got the better of the poet. There is a lot of brain work but little emotion in the poem. In *The End of a War*, as in much of his later verse, Read has given us some 'terse intellectual poetry of austere beauty'. There is no doubt that in his later verse Read has achieved a brilliant poetic style which for want of emotion becomes hard and cold. I can hardly resist the temptation of quoting further from the observations of Mr. Berry on this poem :

"It might be asserted that the language of the poem is lean and colourless ; that its image-content is meagre ; that it gives the effect of over-deliberation. Unless a metaphysical poet is a Dante, these are sacrifices that a poem has to make if it is to dedicate itself to a passion of this kind." ¹⁰

After the First World War Herbert Read became more and more cynical and his verse became more and more intellectual and terse. He also made extensive experiments in a kind of free verse of his own which he had adopted as the regular medium for his poetry since the twenties. In his free verse, he rejected traditional metre and rhymes and broke the lines of his verse into different lengths and arranged them in the form of a poem. Sometimes the break took place arbitrarily, in the middle of a word. The examples below will illustrate the points :

His limbs
dangle
like marionettes'
over
a
mauve
sca. (Picaresque)

..... to single
perceptions communic-
ation is not essential.—(*Beata l'Alma*)

It had been noted by some critics that the poetry of the twenties had been predominantly satirical. Read's poetry of the period was no exception to this. The war verse he had written in the twenties also shows prominence of this satiric spirit. *A Short Poem for Armistice Day*, for instance, has been conceived from beginning to end in a satirical vein. The poem has a reference to the armistice day of the First World War. The central idea of the poem is that the honour shown to the war dead on the armistice Day by means

of "artificial flowers of paper tin and metal thread" is nothing short of mockery. The satire hardened by cynicism emerges in the second half of the poem :

I have no power therefore have patience
 These flowers gave no sweet scent
 no lustre in the petal no increase
 from fertilizing flies and bees.
 No seed they have no seed
 their tendrils are of wire and grip
 the buttonhole the lip
 and never fade
 And will not fade though life
 and lustre go in genuine flowers
 and men like flowers are cut
 and withered on a stem.
 And will not fade a year or more
 I stuck one in a candlestick
 and there it clings about the socket
 I have no power therefore have patience.

The lines 'men like flowers are cut/and withered on a stem' appear to echo the sentiment expressed in the following lines from Owen's *Insensibility* :

The front line withers,
 But they are troops who fade, not flowers
 For poets' tearful fooling :

The line 'I have no power therefore have patience', which occurs twice in the poem, acts like a refrain and closes the poem. The implication of the line is that as he has no power to undo the hypocrisy practised on a large scale on the Armistice Day by the people in their show of honour to the millions killed in the War, his only alternative is to 'have patience'.

In another poem *The Nuncio* written by Herbert Read in the twenties, the same cynicism and satirical glance at the propaganda speeches made in wartime are apparent :

'We may not have long to wait
 not so very long.
 There has been despair : the first shock of defeat
 cost us more losses in faith than in men.
 Now we must build again
 repair our broken parapets
 dig fresh communication trenches.
 The lines are cut ; runners must proceed with messages
 At all costs we must make contact
 assemble our scattered units

issue orders for a counter-attack.

Against tyrants there is only one weapon
 anciently the pen now the microphone.
 From the high tension of our minds
 must radiate such measures as the situation demands
 From Moscow Princeton Berlin and Paris
 from London Tokyo Rome and Buenos Ayres
 from every city school and cloister
 we must gather to avoid disaster.
 Our structures are of steel and glass
 their subtle struts not obvious
 we build with space in space
 and by ingenuity produce
 our aerial houses high towers
 our winding stairs—
 all is in light
 above board and ought
 to win the approval of the masses.'

[At the end of the speech the audience left the hall each intent,
 each mind full of plans, prognostications and strategies.]

The Nuncio is a long poem of one hundred and ninety one lines in 'unmetrical couplets'. There are no regular stanzas. What looks like a stanza is nothing short of an arbitrary number of lines grouped together and given the appearance of a stanza. Apparently there are no traditional rhymes in the whole poem. But a very careful analysis of the poem will reveal that Herbert Read had employed almost throughout the poem a different kind of rhymes known as para-rhymes which had been used, extensively, and perfected by Owen in his war poetry. To my knowledge, no critic has ever observed the considerable influence of the para-rhyming technique of Owen on this particular poem of Read's. In fact, the poem is, apart from its content of the wartime propaganda speeches, merely an exercise in para-rhymes exactly in Owen's manner.

Be it mentioned here that Owen had used two kinds of para-rhymes in his poetry. The first kind is the regular para-rhyme which he had used extensively such as groined: groaned/hall: hell/grained: ground/mourn: moan/years: yours/laughed: left/spoiled: spill mystery: mastery/etc. (*Strange Meeting*); leaves: lives/ferns: fawns/summer: simmer/cauldron: children/loads: lids: lads (*Miners*); rest: roost/days: doze/ardours: odours/stairs: start/(*The Roads Also*) etc. The second kind of para-rhymes which Owen has used very sparingly is the partial ones (i.e. in which only the last parts or syllables of the words para-rhyme) such *bestirred: stared/*

eyes : *bless/untold* : *distilled/tigress* : *progress/taint* : *stint/escaped* : *scooped/(Strange Meeting)* ; *coal* : *recall/number* : *remember/pits* : *repudied* : *indeed/(Miners)* ; *room* : *dream/stops* : *taps/tears* : *upstairs/(The Roads Also)*, etc. The para-rhymes of the regular type used by Herbert Read in *The Nuncio* are few in number:—rabbit: robot/fire: fear/rash: rush/ill: all. Almost throughout the rest of the long poem Read has employed the partial para-rhymes which had been very sparingly used by Owen:—weapon: microphone/minds: demands/Paris: Ayres/cloister: disaster/wind: mind/wall: appeal: steel/bunting: ranting/war: core/escapes: dupes/criss-cross: glass/ambush: mesh/space: pierce/traverse: eyes: nose: course/supreme: flame/priests: behests/lily: eternally/feeling: ruling/stood: tide/(cf. Owen's stars; tears)/Hand: command/prevails: symbols/level: evil/hall: full/towers: stairs (cf. Owen's stairs: towers or stars in *The Roads Also*), etc.

It is evidently clear that for his poem Herbert Read has mainly adopted the technique of partial para-rhymes which Owen had used so sparingly. It is needless to say that Read's use of the para-rhyming technique has not been as happy or successful as Owen's employment of it had been. *The Nuncio* seems to have caught something of the tone and spirit of Owen's *Smile, Smile, Smile* particularly in the manner in which Starr, the speaker, delivers his wartime speech over the microphone. It is the same manner in which the 'Mail' in Owen's poem conducted war efforts through its pages. A close and comparative study of the two poems will reveal this subtle influence of Owen's poem on Herbert Read's *The Nuncio*. Starr's speech over the mike is clear and bold on points which are relevant to the war efforts, but indistinct and almost inaudible on points related to peacetime reconstruction:

.... and when
Star spoke again
his whisper barely reached the microphone.

Owen's poem begins thus:—

Head to limp head, the sunk-eyed wounded scanned
Yesterday's *Mail*; the casualties (typed small)
And (large) Vast Booty from our Latest Haul.
Also, they read of Cheap Homes, not yet planned
For, said the paper, "When this war is done
The men's first instinct will be making homes.
Meanwhile their foremost need is aerodromes,
It being certain the war has but begun
etc. etc.

Some of Herbert Read's poems of the twenties, apparently unconnected with war, contain memories which had haunted him ever since the

First War. Of this group of poems *Beata l'Alma* is one. The poem opens with a theme which is somewhat similar to T. S. Eliot's favourite theme of the timeless in time as both the title and the opening lines of the poem suggest. The title means—'Blessed is the soul in which time does not run.' The opening line is—"Time ends when vision sees its lapse in/liberty."

The traumatic experience of the First War made Read one of 'a cynic race', and he could find nothing good in the post-war world, which he depicts in terms of imagery similar to that in Eliot's *The Waste Land*. In the dark post-war world the poet moves like a blind man. Here are the opening stanzas of the poem:

.... The seven
 sleepers quit their den and wild lamentations
 fill our voiceless bodies. Echoes are.
 You will never understand the mind's
 misanthropy, nor see
 that all is foul and fit to screech in.
 It is an eye's anarchy: men are ghoulish stumps
 and the air is a river of opaque
 filth. God! I cannot see
 to design these stark reaches, these bulging
 contours pressed against me in the maddening dark.
 A blindman's buff and no distilling
 of song for the woeful
 scenes of agony. Never
 will rest
 the mind an instant in its birdlike flutterings.

In such a dark, drab, and dreary world one can never expect peace of mind. Individuals are isolated and even communication is impossible. The death wish, it seems, has seized the individuals.

The poet then depicts the 'cynic race' to which he and his generation, perpetually haunted as they are by the memories of the War, belong. The War has not only spelt destruction of human life on a gigantic scale, it has also affected the vegetative life of Nature:

A cynic race—to bleak ecstasies
 we are driven by our
 sombre destiny. Men's shouts
 are not
 glad enough to echo in our groined hearts. We know
war and its dead, and famine's bleached bones:
 black rot overreaching
 the silent pressure of life
 in fronds
 of green ferns and in the fragile shell of *white flesh*.

It may be incidentally mentioned that the stanzas quoted above appear to have caught echoes of one of Owen's well-known poems, *Miners*, as is evident from Read's use of some significant phrases of Owen's poem such as '*war and its dead*', '*bleached bones*' and '*white flesh*' (Owen has '*white bones*'), '*fronds*' and '*ferns*'. The relevant lines from Owen's *Miners* are quoted below:

I listened for a tale of leaves
 And *smothered ferns*;
*Fron*d-forests; and the low, sly lives
 Before the fawns.

* * *

I saw *white bones* in the cinder-shard.
 Bones without number;
 For many *hearts with coal are charred*
 And few remember.
 I thought of some who worked dark pits
 Of *war and died*
Digging the rock where Death reposes
 Peace lies indeed.

In Read's '*groined hearts*' is paralleled Owen's '*hearts with coal are charred*'. In the word '*groined*' I also find an association with the same word in the lines '*Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped/Through granites which titanic wars had groined*' in Owen's *Strange Meeting*.

If the world is to be saved from this universal destruction by war, continues Read, it has to be peopled with a new race of men which '*must refashion*' '*sense and image*', must develop a new kind of sensibility and a new kind of symbol for it:

New children must be born of gods in
 a deathless land, where the
uneroded rocks bound clear
 from cool
 glassy tarns, and no flat is in the mind or flesh.
 Sense and image they must refashion—
 they will not recreate
 love: love ends in hate; they will
 not use
 words: *words lie*.

Read's phrase '*uneroded rocks*' may have an implication of the meaning of '*digging the rock*' of Owen's *Miners*. Read's meaning of the phrase, when interpreted in terms of Owen's phrase, will be that in the '*deathless land*' of his vision, young men have not to '*dig the rock*' of war and '*die*'. The phrase '*words lie*' has an allusion, in the context of Read's war memory, to the false propaganda of the

political leaders of the First War by which 'the doomed youth' of his generation was deceived. The phrase may also have reference to the closing lines of Owen's *Dulce et Decorum est*:

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The *old Lie*: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori

Here may be quoted with some relevance the following passage from Herbert Read's essay *The Failure of the War Books* (1945) so as to throw some light on the meaning of the lines—'Sense and image they must refashion etc.' :

"We must continue to tell the truth about war as about all things. But the telling must be a confession of shame and failure. After a Second World War either we perish as a civilisation or a new generation will create a new literature. Not a literature of reportage, of pride in experience, of vicarious suffering. But a literature of constructive imagination, of social idealism, of positive morality."¹¹

Some of Read's poems were also inspired by the Spanish Civil War (e.g. *Bombing Casualties in Spain*).

Annals of Innocence and Experience (1940) is Herbert Read's autobiographical account of his experience of the First World War the memories of which have haunted him ever since. This work, like Edmund Blunden's *Undertones of War* (1928), Robert Graves's *Goodbye to All That*, and Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, is a highly readable book.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, too, Read had something to say and said it finely too. Some of his finest poems about war had been written during the Second World War. In the poems of this period he does not record his reactions to the Second World War so much as he conveys his vision of the First. On the poems of this group he brings to bear his mature poetic powers, vision and a brilliant style. Some of the finest poems of this period are—*To a Conscript of 1940*, *Dunkirk Ode* (written during the battle of Dunkirk, May, 1940), *A World within a War* (1944), and 1945.

'Herbert Read having served in the First World War fitly passed on his vision in *To a Conscript of 1940*.' In this poem, Read gazed on his 'ghost of five-and-twenty years ago' when he 'too was one of an army of young men marching into the unknown'. To the conscript of 1940 he said :

'I am one of those who went before you
Five-and-twenty years ago : one of the many who never returned,
Of the many who returned and yet were dead.
We went where you are going, into the rain and the mud ;

We fought as will fight
 With death and darkness and despair;
 We gave what you will give—our brains and our blood.
 We think we gave in vain. The world was not renewed...

What he learnt in the war was that 'there is no glory' in it. He and his generation were deceived, for they had no idea of what a war, particularly, what a modern war really meant. But the conscript of 1940 has no such illusions and, therefore, he has 'to fight without hope':

'Theirs is the hollow victory. They are deceived.
 But you, my brother and my ghost, if you can go
 Knowing that there is no reward, no certain use
 In all your sacrifice, then honour is reprieved.
 To fight without hope is to fight with grace,
 The self reconstructed, the false heart repaired.'

Mr. Bullough has rightly remarked: "... the faith in man shines through the unembittered gravity of *To a Conscript of 1940*."¹²

Read's *Dunkirk Ode* gives 'noble expression to the spiritual upheaval in the individual which turned defeat into a national revival.' Some of its lines are strongly reminiscent of the poetic purpose which Owen embodied in his *Preface*:

No visible wounds to lick—only a resolve
 to tell the truth without rhetoric
 the truth about war and about men
 involved in indignities of war!

Reminiscence of Owen's *Miners*, on which Owen's own note was—'How the Future will forget the dead in war', reappears in the following lines of the poem:

But the world tired and would forget
 forget the cry of those who died in agony
 with mouth still open ... eyes.

Then follows another bit of reminiscence of the First World War and of the twenty years between the Wars:

And so we drifted twenty years
 down the stream of time
 feeling that such a storm
 would not break again.

Similar 'storm' image in the interpretation of the war was also employed by Owen in his *Storm* and *The Seed*.

1945 is most remarkable for its sombre tone and visionary quality, which again remind us of the poetry of Owen. The poem presents an imaginative vision of the war which is absent from Read's earlier war poems. The sea with its waves breaking endlessly 'on the silted beach' where the omens of an ancient quarrel lay scattered is symboli-

cal of the vast ocean of death which engulfed millions of young men participating in the World Wars, First and Second. 1945 is one of the finest war poems Read had ever produced:

1945

They came running over the perilous sands
 Children with their golden eyes
 Crying: *Look! We have found samphire*
 Holding out their bone-ridden hands.
 It might have been the spittle of wrens
 Or the silver nest of a squirrel
 For I was invested with the darkness
 Of an ancient quarrel whose omens
 Lay scattered on the silted beach.
 The children came running toward me
 But I saw only the waves behind them
 Cold, salt and disastrous
 Lift their black banners and break
 Endlessly, without resurrection.

The poem demonstrates, as Mr. Berry rightly observes, 'Read's virtues: acuity of observation, purity of style, point and concentration. These are rare virtues in English poetry, and on any reckoning, Herbert Read is one of the few fine poets of his generation.'¹³

II

Herbert Read as a Critic

After the First World War Herbert Read distinguished himself as a critic of literature, society, and arts (both fine and plastic). In all these fields Read made significant contributions the impact of which has been profoundly felt by his generation. In his critical essay, *The Future of Poetry* (1925) he was of opinion that there 'lay inherent defects of the traditional poetic form' as a result of which poetry failed to keep pace with the 'rhythm of contemporary life'. With T. E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, the imagists, and T. S. Eliot, Read felt the need of the revitalisation of the English poetic diction. With such ideas Read began making experiments in the technique of verse.

In his critical essay, *Form in Modern Poetry* (1932), Read developed the theory of poetic form. The theory concerns itself with the idea of 'organic form' in poetry or a work of art. By the 'organic form' he means the form which is dictated by the imagination of the artist and grows out of the material of the work of art. This is to be contrasted with the 'abstract form' which pre-exists the poem and is superimposed upon its content. This idea of the 'organic form' constitutes the nexus of his critical thought. In his theory of the 'organic form' Read was

influenced by Coleridge's ideas of Fancy and Imagination as also by modern theories of psychology and psychoanalysis. In his *The True Voice of Feeling* (1953), Read applies his ideas of the 'organic form' in poetry to an interpretation of the works of the Romantic poets. His critical studies of the romantic poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Byron are highly illuminating and have successfully re-established the reputation of the great Romantics in modern times.

At one time Read was one of the chief exponents of surrealism which was, as he held 'a reaffirmation of the romantic principle'. Some of his observations on surrealism, as embodied in his essay *Realism and Superrealism* may be quoted here:—Superrealism 'begins with what is conjured up or imagined in the mind—the image, the phantom, or the dream....It has no ready-made stock-in-trade. In has no tradition, no rules....It is the exploration of the heights and depths of the human mind'.¹⁴ His critical position in regard to surrealism seems somewhat different from the original conception of it, which was concerned with some kind of automatic writing from the subconscious mind without the control of reason. It may be mentioned here that surrealism was an off-shoot of Dadaism which was concerned with nonsense writing.

Read's critical essays are remarkable as much for his brilliant approach to his subject as for the variety and range of the subjects themselves. *A Coat of Many Colours* (1945) is a collection of seventy-one essays. Many of the essays in the collection throw highly illuminating light on their subjects. Read's profound critical insight reveals itself in flashes in many of the observations Read has made in several essays. It will be worthwhile to quote here some of them. In his first essay, *The Greatest Work of Art in the World*, he observes: "There is no *greatness* in art, nor *smallness*, for art is an act of creation, and what is created is not created great or small, but given simple existence."¹⁵ Commenting on the painting of Paul Klee he remarks "Personally, I am against the grandiose in art. It does not merely bore me, it intimidates me. I do not believe it is necessary. The greatest truth was ever spoken in a still small voice. The great mystics are not long-winded. Great poetry is not sustained beyond a page or two of print. The greatest painting can be contained within a square foot of canvas. The greatest is never the grandiose."¹⁶ As an art critic Read has made illuminating observations about painting; "An artist is a man who looks at nature with unclouded vision. He is continually gathering material from his experience of things seen. In this material he finds forms and qualities which start him off, excite his ideas and stimulate his emotion, and cause him to play with these forms and qualities, reconstruct them and recreate them until they become images which express the reality of his visual experiences."¹⁷ Defining the

approach to art he says: "The true approach is open-minded. If we meet a stranger, we do not know what his voice will sound like, nor even if he will speak our language. We wait expectantly. In much the same way we should wait for a work of art to speak to us."¹⁸ To expect 'religious consolation or political enthusiasm in painted canvas or carved stone,' says Read, 'seems to me like asking them to indulge in a new kind of crystal-gazing.... But in the end there is only good art and bad art. And good art is something at once very simple and very profound.'¹⁹ Finally, he says in his essay, *The Language of the Eye*, from which the above remarks are quoted 'It is a language which can be understood in all places and at all times.' Read has grasped the essence of the Indian art when he says: 'It is firmly based in life—in a very sensuous fullness of life; but it transcends life. It is never in our sense of the word merely naturalistic.'²⁰

In his essays, *Film Aesthetic* and *The Poet and the Film* Herbert Read has made some interesting observations which the film Directors may as well note.

Film, Read says, is a work of art. For selection is the first criterion of a work of art, and, 'selection,' Read continues, 'I think it can be shown, is the very first principle of the film; the film is therefore essentially an art' (*Film Aesthetic*). Again, 'The camera is the film-director's tool, his medium is light, or rather the impact of light on solid objects. It might be better still to regard camera as a chisel of light, cutting into the reality of objects. In any case, light is the muse.... Sculpture is the art of space, as music of time. The film is the art of space-time; it is a space-time continuum.'²¹

In the essay, *The Poet and the Film*, Herbert Read says; "Every work of art is a product of the creative imagination, and to be worthy of the name of art, the film, too, must be a product of the creative imagination.... The film of imagination—as a work of art ranking with great drama, great literature, and great painting—will not come until the poet enters the studio."²² In the same essay he discusses elaborately his ideas on 'the creative imagination' in which he is influenced by Coleridge. By the creative imagination he means 'Not merely imagination, but imagination embodied. Imagination finding its objective equivalents in sight and sound and touch. Imagination translated into sensible shapes, tones and textures.'²³

Establishing a relation between the film as a visual art and literature Read observes that good literature is also a kind film of the mind in which ideas are projected 'on to the screen of the brain' so as to make it see them. Good literature must convey images by means of words. In short, he holds that the film should be a work of art, a product of the creative imagination; and, inversely, literature should also be a kind of film of the mind.

Mr. Berry has rightly observed: "In his books on art Read brings to bear on his subject the same intellectual insight which he enjoys as a poet, . . . his mind embraces art of all historic and pre-historic periods and cultures."²⁴

Herbert Read's critical output after the First World War has exceeded by far his creative work in poetry. A critical faculty like Read's, which worked with equal power and profound insight in different fields of criticism—art, literature, and society, and made very significant contributions in each, could not but be of the highest order. It was not without reason that Read was acclaimed even before his death as one of the two or three great English critics of the present century who have formed the critical taste of our time.

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THE ENGLISH THEATRE TILL THE EIGHTEEN-NINETIES

BISHNUPADA BERA

It was Arthur Wing Pinero who started the new era of modern English drama with the première of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* on May 27, 1893. George Bernard Shaw had already made his debut on December 9, 1892, with *Widowers' Houses*, regarded by some critics as no less modern than *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. These two playwrights along with Henry Arthur Jones brought the English dramatic renaissance by raising the British theatre out of the gutter. The phenomenal success of Mrs. Patrick Campbell at the St. James's Theatre as the heroine of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, which struck most critics as new in form and content, induced the serious students of English dramatic literature to muse on the world of difference between the conventions of the picture-frame stage of the eighteen-nineties and those of the Platform stage of Elizabethan England which excluded all actresses, curiously enough, like the Attic stage or the Chinese and the Japanese stages of old. They would reflect, further, how in view of the changes in the theatrical conditions the "Drama of rhetoric"¹ which came so natural on the Elizabethan stage was found unsuitable for the picture-frame stage and how the British playwrights learnt to adjust their plays to this realistic stage when the tremendous impact of Ibsen fell on the London boards. A survey of the English theatre till the eighteen-nineties should, therefore, be significant to indicate the changes in the physical conditions of the British theatre which occasioned the evolution of the picture-frame stage of the 'nineties from the platform stage of the Elizabethan era. It should be significant as well to account for the state of backwater in which English drama had lain since the performance of *The School for scandal* on May 8, 1777, till the vivifying breath of Ibsen gave the British theatre a fresh lease of life.

The first public playhouse in the Elizabethan era, the Theatre, was built by J. Burbage in 1576. Similar playhouses were the Curtain, the Rose, the Swan, the Fortune, and the Blackfriars. All these had the characteristic platform stage, divided into three sections the inner stage, the upper stage, and the outer stage. The inner stage was a part of the tiring house with an arras in front and the upper room

above the arras was the upper stage. The inner stage had some sort of a roof over it, but the outer stage was open to the sky like the Attic stage. The outer stage was the main stage and it projected like the Greek Orchestra into the auditorium, sometimes with forward gallants perching on the three-legged stools at the edges of the stage, the groundlings standing and jostling in the pit and the others crowding the galleries.

It will not be out of place to mention here that the outer stage of the Elizabethan playhouse without any front curtain and with the audience thronging its three sides offers a strange affinity with the Attic stage and the oriental stages of old²; it resembles too in a way the Yâtrâ performance of Bengal wherein the audience surrounds the stage with only one gangway running right through the spectators like the "Flower-path" of the Kabuki stage. There being no artificial division between the audience and the actors, the intimacy between the audience and the stage was complete in all these cases and the stage device for effecting articulateness of characters in each case was the same.

It is because of this "audience participation" that asides and soliloquies came so natural on the Elizabethan stage and an imaginative acceptance of the stage conventions of make-believe made it possible to create an illusion of reality, despite the absence of scenery, by means of highly poetical, descriptive texts. Thus originated the drama of rhetoric with its characteristic declamation and imaginative appeal. It was for this naive acceptance of the stage conventions³, again, that the outer stage of the Elizabethan playhouse, a piece of neutral ground, could readily be turned in the audience's imagination into the Forest of Arden or the battle field near Shrewsbury or the sea-port of Cyprus. The inner stage with the arras drawn would likewise serve as Prospero's cell or the Queen's closet or Faustus's study and the upper stage too might be used as Juliet's balcony or Cleopatra's monument or the walls of Harfleur.

The Elizabethan stage—"this wooden O" of Shakespeare—offers a striking contrast to the modern picture-frame stage, as the fourth wall convention has changed the audience from active participators to eavesdroppers only. Thus the history of the development of the English theatre during the three succeeding centuries is the history of the gradual recession of the stage from the audience and of the slow but sure advance of realism, in the wake of which "the poet is swallowed up in display"⁴—a loss which might have been counterbalanced had the British dramatists been impressed by the psychological and symbolic dramas of Ibsen rather than his social ones, as Edward Martyn of the Irish dramatic movement had been.

It was in the Restoration period that the first phase in the trans-

formation of the bare Elizabethan theatre was reached. In place of the Elizabethan open-air theatre there appeared new ones, roofed in and lit up with chandelier, hanging from the ceiling and with most of the spectators seated. The proscenium arch and the front curtain hanging in the opening were the most important features of the Restoration stage which, it should be significant to note, survived in the pictorial stage of the late nineteenth century. For the exit and entrance of the Restoration actors there were doors on each side of the proscenium arch. The front curtain rose at the end of the prologue and it fell after the epilogue had been spoken to mark the end of the performance. The main action, however, took place on the "apron" which projected in front of the curtain about 13 feet in the auditorium in the form of a semi-circle. Scenery had been introduced by William Davenant with the production of *The Siege of Rhodes* in May 1656 and this rendered any explanatory, descriptive passage in the text a superfluity. With the growing prominence of the scenic designers and the mechanists an appeal to the eyes was deemed more effective than an appeal to the imagination.

It was Thomas Killigrew who introduced women on the English stage at the beginning of the Restoration period. It was an innovation of the highest importance; for in the succeeding ages actresses like Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Campbell, Ellen Terry and Janet Achurch dominated the stage as much as David Garrick or Edmund Kean or Charles Macready or Henry Irving.

The Restoration theatre was not the people's theatre like the Elizabethan. The court and the theatre being now on "marrying terms",⁵ the Restoration playhouse was the especial haunt of the licentious out witty cavaliers and courtiers. The drama was suited to the taste and temperament of the courtly audience. A new trend in the dramatic composition was now discernible. The drama of conversation, initiated by Sir George Etherege, sparkled with wit: smart repartees were used in place of set speeches and poetical lines, characteristic of the drama of rhetoric. This type of drama reached its culmination in Sheridan a century later. It should be significant to note that the performers on the apron of Queen Anne stage were parlour actors or drawing-room entertainers and the men and women, seated in the boxes lining the apron applauded them as partakers in the conversation. Moreover, the rise of small theatres with the passing of the Theatre Regulation Act of 1843 offered a greater sense of intimacy by diminishing the demands for eloquence.

Meanwhile, changes were taking place in the physical conditions of the theatre. It was in the 18th century that the apron stage was shortened and a pair of proscenium doors (nearer the pit) was cut away, though by way of compensation, a door was added on each

side just inside the proscenium. Then came Garrick's famous innovation of footlights at Drury Lane in 1765 which induced the players to do all the acting within the focus of the floats so that their faces might be seen. The 19th century witnessed a few more important changes. The use of chandeliers was discarded when gas was introduced in 1817 for lighting English theatres. The next momentous innovation that brought revolutionary changes was the introduction of the realistic "box-set" in place of wings and backdrops. This was the immortal achievement of Mme. Vestris, who used it at the first performance of Boucicault's *London Assurance* in 1841. This was in direct response to her desire for greater and greater degrees of naturalness in representation—a desire which was shared alike by J. R. Planche and Charles Kean, who were keen on ensuring historical accuracy in stage furniture and setting. Similarly an increasing attention to pictorial effect motivated the creation of the "transparent" and "cut-out" scenery and the *Eudophuskion*⁶ by stage craftsmen like Loutherboung and Capon.

The most vital change in the physical conditions of the English theatre was effected when in October, 1881, the Savoy Theatre was lighted entirely by electricity. With its use on the stage the remnants of the apron and the proscenium doors were removed. This completed the formation of the picture-frame stage which came in the wake of the box-set, as the final evolution of the platform stage of the Elizabethan era. This was, in fact, the culmination of the movement since Robertson to reproduce the real on the stage. The Bancrofts used to decorate the proscenium opening of the Haymarket with a gilt picture-frame, about two feet broad. This was to set up a frontier between the stage and the auditorium. The proscenium was thus the picture-frame and the stage behind it, the picture and the scene upon which it was customary to ring the curtain down had the very look of everyday life. Every corner of the stage being now clearly visible from all parts of the auditorium, the fourth wall convention required the actors to "keep in the picture" and to seem totally oblivious of the audience. So to declaim a soliloquy or to step out of the picture for an aside was merely to spoil the illusion of actually. As a realistic play must needs be played realistically on a realistic stage, the time-honoured dramatic devices of soliloquy and aside were abolished under the influence of Ibsen; whereupon the pictorial stage of the 'nineties was rendered fit for the production of the "intellectual-realistic" plays of Ibsen or Shaw.

It is not enough merely to indicate Ibsen's contribution in making the English stage thoroughly realistic. It may be asserted as well that Ibsen galvanized into life the British drama that had lain almost defunct since Sheridan (T. W. Robertson excepted) and it was he who

sped up the English Dramatic Renaissance of the 'nineties. A great drama means bringing life to the theatre and bringing the theatre to life.⁷ It is life that the British drama of the 19th century till the 'nineties deplorably lacked. It was hardly in touch with contemporary life and ideas. The commercialization of the theatre in the wake of the Industrial Revolution made the actor-manager an autocrat of the stage who looked to the box-office return alone. Drama was no longer treated as an art but merely as an entertainment. To suit the taste of the uneducated and "unideal" masses who flocked to playhouses for an escape from the worries of daily life, the drama acted upon the stage was all sensation, all sentiment and all emotion. The ingenuity and resources of the theatre were, therefore, exhausted in meeting the insistent demand for the spectacular and melodramatic fare. The drama which pleased the audience had no brains behind it and any appeal to the intellect was unavailing; for the untutored rabble who ruled the theatre seemed to care more for animal performance on the stage than human acting.⁸ Puritan prejudices and social ostracism against which the theatre had to contend had kept the intelligent, educated and literary sections of the public far away from the supposed haunt of the lost souls. Moreover, the Victorian compromise did not permit any serious discussion of life and society upon the stage.

Divorced not only from life but from literature too, the British drama till the eighteen-nineties lay in backwater. Generally speaking, the English theatre in the 19th century was fed on pirated versions of Parisian farces or plays of the Scribean mould or the slavish imitations of Shakespeare, so ruthlessly denounced by Shaw as "Bardolatry". There was little scope, therefore, for the growth of native drama. Dramatic penmanship was neither remunerative nor respectable. The dominance of the actor-manager had turned the playwright of average merit to a hack writer who eked out a miserable existence by pilfering from French pieces, as advised by the actor-manager.⁹ True it is that at this crisis the poets of the century from Coleridge to Tennyson came to the rescue of the native drama, but most of what they wrote was for the study and not for the stage—readable but notactable. They wrote in the romantic tradition for the Elizabethan platform stage which had now ceased to exist and they did not know how to adjust their plays to the modern picture-frame stage. The men of literary genius did not take to playwriting seriously; with them the stage was only a side issue, while poetry or fiction offered greater opportunities for self-expression.

In spite of these shortcomings of the English drama, the British stage had been kept alive by a galaxy of great actors who did a great deal for the stage but very little for the native drama. They usually played Shakespeare and when not playing Shakespeare, they preferred

appearing in imitations of Shakespeare or adaptations from French pieces. However, in this sad plight of English drama *The Rent Day* (1832) of Douglas Jerrold, Bulwer Lytton's *Money* (1840), and Dion Boucicault's *London Assurance* (1841) were hailed with applause for a new glimmering of life. Lytton and Boucicault with their keen theatrical sense could sense what the audience now demanded and they "suggested new things in dramatic forms"¹⁰. It was for T. W. Robertson, however, to take up the cue in the eighteen-sixties and pioneer the realistic movement in English drama and raise it from the slough in which it had fallen.

Son of a Lincolnshire actor-manager, Tom Robertson (1829-71) was, as he himself said, "nursed in rose-pink and cradled in properties".¹¹ As the stage was in his blood, with an amazing insight he sensed a change in the "psychological climate", when in 1861 Fechter played Hamlet in a natural way, to the intense delight of the audience.¹² Robertson felt that the time was ripe for introducing the style of natural acting in place of the traditional fustian of the platform stage. Thus he ventured upon an experiment with his domestic comedy of everyday life and character. November 11, 1865, the date of the production of Robertson's *Society* by Marie Wilton and Squire Bancroft at the Prince of Wales's Theatre is a red letter day in the history of English dramatic literature. This comedy, which had been rejected by Mr. Buckstone of the Haymarket as "Rubbish", took London by storm and marked the beginning of a new era in English comedy. Robertson leapt into fame overnight as the herald of the dawn of English Dramatic Renaissance.

Robertson's *Caste* (1867) and his other plays established his reputation as an innovator of the realistic drawing-room comedy or the "cup-and-saucer drama" as his home-brewed comedy came to be known, in view of its striking homeliness of theme and sentiment. Domestic drama, as he found it, "had no more semblance to life than in stature a flea has to an elephant".¹³ He brought life to the theatre by breaking with the romantic traditions. For conventional stage puppets he substituted real men and women and he gave his plays a semblance of life by dealing in a small way with contemporary ideas. In place of the rhetorical blank verse, characteristic of the romantic traditions he approached the language of everyday life—the crisp, "staccato dialogue" in prose, of the conversational type. He initiated realistic production and insisted not only on the naturalness of acting but also on the naturalness in dress, tones, and even gestures of the actors. He was the first to follow the "eaves-dropping convention"¹⁴ and his characters would now and then turn their backs to the audience. In fact, the Bancroft Robertson production restored the theatre to polite society by elevating and refining the tone of the theatre.

True it is that the realism which Robertson introduced on the English stage was surface realism—a thing somewhat different from the inner realism of Ibsen and Shaw; yet he deserves due credit for helping prepare the way for the coming of Ibsen on the English stage.

The superficial realistic movement which Robertson had set on foot came to a halt with his death in 1871. His immediate successors—James Albery and H. J. Byron, though influenced by him did nothing to advance the movement. It was after two decades that Robertson's mantle fell on Henry Arthur Jones, Arthur Wing Pinero and Bernard Shaw. Meanwhile, the theatre was growing respectable, but English drama still lay in a highly deplorable state, as has been truly pictured by Henry James.¹⁵ In 1879 Matthew Arnold in his *Mixed Essays* referred to the British theatre as “probably the most contemptible in Europe”; yet discerning the potentiality of the theatre for social reform he declared. “The theatre is irresistible; organise the theatre”¹⁶. There was, however, no immediate response to this clarion call. Drama in the early 'eighties was “a rather childish affair”¹⁷. It was in 1884 that H. A. Jones made an attempt at serious drama in *Saints and Sinners*. In the *Nineteenth Century* (January, 1885) Jones claimed the dramatist's supreme right to represent on the stage all the aspects of life including religion.¹⁸ In *About the Theatre* (1886) William Archer commended A. W. Pinero as “the most original and remarkable of living English playwrights”.¹⁹ In 1887 Pinero justified this estimate by writing *The Profligate*, a serious drama which was hailed as “the herald of a bright new era of English dramatic literature,”²⁰ but the drama which brought him continental reputation and with which he ushered in the era of modern drama was written in the 'nineties under the tremendous impact of Ibsen which fell on the London boards with the production of *A Doll's House* at the Novelty Theatre on June 7, 1889 by Charles Charrington and Janet Achurch. Then the Ibsenian broadsides shook England and the British theatre was quite revolutionised as it “came into shattering collision with the Norwegian giant”.²¹

The Ibsenian impact on the London boards in the 'nineties was a sort of “moral earthquake”²² which “threatened to bring every suburban villa crashing to the ground in a hurricane of Feminism, Anti-clericalism and Anti-Idealism”.²³ The myrmidons of morality, therefore, stood aghast and volleys of abuses and execration were hurled at Ibsen. In the *Daily Telegraph* of the 14th March, 1891 there appeared Scott's review of the London production of *Ghosts*²⁴ with which J. T. Grein opened the Independent Theatre on March 13, 1891. This alone is quite enough to indicate what sort of reception was accorded to the “grand master of European literature”.²⁵ The battle over Ibsen raged till by 1893 Ibsen came to be acknowledged

as a "master-force"²⁶ in British dramatic literature. In fact, Ibsen's "innovations in technique were imitated or at least experimented with, as eagerly as were the technical methods of Scribe".²⁷ The British playwrights became more serious and purposeful with their turning to problem plays for discussion on the issues of contemporary life. It is probably the craze for "a new drama of Ibsenian novelty and importance"²⁸ which led even a reactionary like Clement Scott to own defeat.²⁹ In fact, Ibsen was irresistible and very few of his contemporaries could escape his influence. Henry Arthur Jones, Arthur Wing Pinero and Bernard Shaw, the three premier British playwrights of the 'nineties came directly under his influence and brought the English dramatic renaissance by following him on the stage.

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3. Vide Prologue to *King Henry the Fifth*, Act 1.
4. An expression of Macready, quoted in *The Victorian Theatre* by George Rowell, p. 16.
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THE HUMOUR OF *TRISTRAM SHANDY*

AMBARNATH CHATTERJEE

I

Humour and sympathy :

Humour is distinguished by individuality and freedom of mind. Rational conformity will produce wit, which is evoked through reason. The essence of humour is non-conformity, and it is evoked through feeling, through imagination. All great humorists, from Rabelais to Dickens, have hammered at tradition. They imagined greatly and felt intensely. Even as they rebel, they radiate joy; for humour is amusement at any incongruity, or deviation from the norm. Humour is tolerant, indulgent ; while wit or satire is critical and condemnatory. Humour comes from sympathy, from love of mankind. Carlyle rightly said that

“The essence of humour is sensibility, warm tender fellow-feeling with all forms of existence...it is not contempt, its essence is love; it issues not in laughter, but in still smiles, which lie far deeper. It is a sort of inverse sublimity ; exalting, as it were, into our affections what is below us, while sublimity draws down into our affections what is above us...It is, in fact, the bloom and perfume, the purest effluence of a deep, fine and loving nature.”¹

Carlyle calls Sterne ‘our last specimen of humour, and with all his faults, our best ; our finest, if not our strongest.’² Sterne’s humour, at its best—as, for example, in his ridicule of the learned folly of Walter Shandy, in his delightful sketch of my Uncle Toby’s campaigns on the bowlinggreen, or in the scene of Tristram’s loving communion with the ass—reveals his intense love of life and his exquisite sensibility.

II

Equating of great and small :

“True humour”, Addison said,

“lies in the thought, and arises from the representation of images in odd circumstances, and uncommon lights”.³ This element of ‘oddity’ and ‘uncommonness’ in humour is explained best by Coleridge, who

said perhaps the most profound words on the nature of humour. According to Coleridge,

“there always is in a genuine humour an acknowledgement of the hollowness and farce of the world and its disproportion to the godlike within us”.⁴

He finds the ‘humorific point common to all that can be called humorous’ in

“a certain reference to the general and the universal, by which the finite great is brought into identity with the little, or the little with the finite great, so as to make both nothing in comparison with the infinite. The little is made great, and the great little, in order to destroy both; because all is equal in contrast with the infinite. ‘It is not without reason, brother Toby, that learned men write dialogues on long noses’ ”.⁵

Sterne’s humour in *Tristram Shandy* derives mainly from the ridiculous absurdity of life-less learning, or blind conformity to tradition, and its ‘disproportion’ to the finer values of life.

In his Invocation to the ‘Gentle Spirit of sweetest humour’ Sterne remembers Cervantes (*T.S.*, IX. 24). He says elsewhere that

“the happiness of the Cervantic humour arises from...describing silly and trifling events with the circumstantial pomp of great ones”.⁶

Walter Shandy, the principal comic figure in the novel, sees a profound philosophical significance in every subject on earth—whether it is Tristram’s procreation, or his nose or naming, or his breeching. Thus, in the affair of his son’s breeching, Mr. Shandy not only tries to engage his unphilosophical wife in a learned discussion on the subject (without any success, of course),

“he consulted Albertus Rubenius upon it...it was Rubenius’s business to have given my father some lights.—On the contrary, my father might as well have thought of extracting the seven cardinal virtues out of a long beard,—as of extracting a single word out of Rubenius upon the subject”;⁷

for, though Rubenius enlightened him upon every article of ancient dress and shoes, it said little about breeches. The expression, *Latus Clavus*, in Rubenius, however, caught his fancy.⁸ And so, as the tailor was making Tristram’s breeches, Walter Shandy stood by his side, ‘reading him...a lecture upon the *Latus Clavus*.’⁹ Earlier, the splenetic Dr. Slop’s firing of curses at Obadiah excites the learned curiosity of Walter Shandy. Though Walter himself seldom curses or swears (“I hold it

bad"¹⁰), yet if he falls into it by accident, he sees to it that the curse answers its purpose. For this reason, he has

"the greatest veneration in the world for that gentleman, who, in distrust of his own discretion in this point, sat down and composed...fit forms of swearing suitable to all cases, from the lowest to the highest provocation which could possibly happen to him—which forms being well considered by him, and such moreover as he could stand to, he kept them ever by him on the chimney-piece, within his reach, ready for use."¹¹

Walter Shandy's learning has really become funny; it has clouded his common sense, his awareness of the realities and the finer values of life. Thus, though he loves his servant Obadiah and would not like him to be cursed, he suffers Dr. Slop to read the long list of curses from Ernulphus and apply them to poor Obadiah, while the unlearned Toby recoils from this outrage on humanity. Humorist Sterne, equating the two—learning and levity (that is, 'finite great' and 'little'), shows their equal unimportance before the infinite great, namely, the sentiments of love and sympathy which bring supreme bliss and fulfilment to life.

Sterne's humoristic genius is revealed in this frequent equating of the high and the low, of the serious and the ludicrous. We note the parallel existence of the high and the low in the Shandy family itself. Every 'high' discussion in the parlour is accompanied by 'low' one in the kitchen—thanks to the bad hinge of the parlour (left unrepaired for ten years ¹² which prevented full closing of the door and made it possible for the servants to get easy scent of the parlour talks. ¹³ Thus, the philosophic oration of Walter in the parlour on the death of Bobby, and the lay oration of Trim on the same subject in the kitchen, go together.¹⁴ Elsewhere, love, the preserver of life, is equated to war, which destroys life—

"Love, an' please your honour, is exactly like war, in this; that a soldier, though he has escaped three weeks complete o' Saturday night,—may nevertheless be shot through his heart on Sunday morning."¹⁵

And so it happened to Uncle Toby. As the amorous Wadman leaves the sentry-box, the good Toby confesses to his emotional disturbance, to his faithful Trim—

"I am in love, corporal! quoth my Uncle Toby. In love!—said the corporal—your honour was very well the day before yesterday, ..

She has left a ball here—added my uncle Toby—pointing to his breast—."¹⁶

Perhaps the finest illustration of Sterne's humour is provided by the Maria scene in *T.S.* Traveller Tristram meets poor Maria at Moulins. She is in deep distraction for her disappointment in love, caused by the intrigues of the curate. She is

“sitting upon a bank playing her vespers upon her pipe, with her little goat beside her.”¹⁷

Tristram, who is deeply moved, comes out of his chaise, and seats himself between Maria and her goat.

“Maria looked wistfully for some time at me, and then at her goat—and then at me—and then at her goat again, and so on, alternately—

—Well, Maria, said I softly—What resemblance do you find ?”¹⁸

Here the humorous equation of man and beast preserves the balance of sentiment, and saves it from running into waste—as Herbert Read appropriately points out (“the goat saves the situation.”).¹⁹ It should be noted here that Sterne, as narrator Tristram, reminds us immediately afterwards that his idea of the ‘resemblance’ of man and beast was not ‘an unseasonable pleasantry in the venerable presence of Misery’,²⁰ but it came from his “humblest conviction of what a Beast man is.”²⁰ The humorous equation of man and beast drives home to us the unity of creation and their equal insignificance before the Supreme Being. The humorous reversal is thus really a straightening up.

III

Humour, folly, indecency :

Many of the so-called indecencies in *T. S.* can be explained by this humoristic device of equating the high and the low. Yorick Sterne saw ‘Everything in this world’ ‘big with jest’.²¹ And as in the case of Shakespeare's fools, some of our Yorick's jests, too, have a higher meaning. The episode of the hot chestnut²²—the grotesque prelude to the conference of the learned divines, for example, is Sterne's comic device to suggest the hollowness of the Clerical debate over Tristram's name. Powys, who wishes that the scene of the Visitation Dinner had better been omitted from the novel,²³ fails to note that the Church scholar's discussion on the validity of baptism—a discussion entirely irrelevant to the present situation (of changing Tristram's name)—with their supreme unconcern with human values (they arrive at the strange conclusion that “the mother is not of kin to her child”)²⁴, is really as ridiculous as the fall of the hot chestnut into the trousers of Phutatorius. Traill, too, did not note this humoristic significance of the scene, when he

describel it as a 'piece of low comedy.'²⁵ The high and the low are put side by side, to reveal the insignificance of both. The vulgar incident of the window-sash is similarly inserted in the novel²⁶ to serve as an equation to the futile philosophy of Tristram's father, who immediately after the accident gathers up his books on circumcision and begins discussing learned theories from them.²⁷ The chapter on Whiskers (*T.S.*, V, 1) which shows how 'the extremes of delicacy and the beginnings of concupiscence' meet, ²⁸ is the author's rapier thrust at the false of delicacy among the society ladies, whose sense of chastity is often finical, rather than fine.

IV

Humor, whimsicality :

We have said (Sec. I, *ante*), humour is happy indulgence at folly, and its essence is freedom and non-conformity. Humour is perpetually hitting at cant. And

"Of all the cants which are canted in this canting world...the cant of criticism is the most tormenting !" ²⁹

Sterne's free jesting spirit, mixed up with a mischievous propensity 'to pluck at your (i.e., the 'graver gentry's') beards',³⁰ and in a non-chalant mockery of tradition, introduces the technical oddities in the novel (*T.S.*), which have been dismissed as mere whimsicalities by the orthodox critics. These oddities are (to mention some of them)—insertion of the Author's Preface in Book III (between Chapters 20 and 21), his blank page (Bk. VI)—put in, as he says, to enable the reader to paint widow Wadman's beauty to his own mind, ³¹ his blank Chapters 18 and 19 in Book IX and their later insertion (after Chapter 25), his omitted Chapter (24) in Book IV with the explanation that the omission was necessitated by considerations of artistic balance in the whole work, ³² the graph of his technique, ³³ and so on. These are eccentricities indulged for the sake of shocking our sense of tradition, our blind faith in conformity. The business of humour—we have pointed out—is to delightfully reverse the accepted order, and to shock us out of our complacency. Sterne's technical oddities curiously reveal to us the folly of rigid adherence to set rules in a work of art. He has his digs frequently at critics, who would judge a work of art by fixed rules and make no allowance for imagination in it—

"—And how did Garrick speak the soliloquy last night ?

—Oh, against all rules, my Lord,—most ungrammatically !...he suspended his voice in the epilogue a dozen times three seconds

and three fifths by a stop-watch, my Lord, each time.—Admirable grammarian ! —but in suspending his voice—was the sense suspended likewise ? Did no expression of attitude or countenance fill up the chasm ?—Was the eye silent ? Did you narrowly look ? —I looked only at the stop-watch, my Lord.—Excellent observer !” ³⁴

Sterne’s occasional freaks of form may thus be taken to be his comic thrusts at his ‘canting’ critics, the blind followers of set rules, who would not “let people tell their stories their own way”. ³⁵

Sterne’s occasional pretensions of conformity to rules are part of the same comic game with the diehards of tradition. For example, at the end of Book VI of the novel, after a spate of digressions, the narrator feigns to relent, and promises to improve. He says that he has digressed too much, and that he will now tell the story in hand (‘my uncle Toby’s story’) ‘in a tolerable straight line’. ³⁶ But actually, a whole Book of 43 Chapters (Bk. VII) intervenes between his pious promise and its execution. Again, even as he digresses—by introducing a conversation with friend ‘Eugenius’ about a monk and a nun—in the midst of his story of running away from Death, he tells his reader—

“there is nothing in this world I abominate worse, than to be interrupted in a story”. ³⁷

Sterne’s comic baiting of critics is seen still in another way—namely, in his occasional pleading of difficulties as narrator. As corporal Trim tells Walter Shandy that Dr. Slop is making a bridge (for the broken nose of the just-born Tristram), Toby takes the word to mean the bridge of his bowling-green. Now, in order to explain why “my uncle Toby mistook the bridge”, ³⁸ the narrator has to tell the story of Toby’s bridge and of Trim’s adventure in it, and much against my will, because the story will be out of place here ;

“by right it should come in, either amongst the anecdotes of my uncle Toby’s amours with widow Wadman, in which corporal Trim was no mean actor—or else in the middle of his and of my uncle Toby’s campaigns on the bowling-green—for it will do very well in either place”. ³⁹

But if he tells the story there,

“I ruin the story I’m ‘upon;—and if I tell it here—I anticipate matters, and ruin it there”. ⁴⁰

He asks his readers and critics—“—What would your worships have me do in this case?” ⁴¹ He imagines the reply of some—“Tell it, Mr. Shandy, by all means” ; ⁴² and of others—“You are a fool, Tris-

tram, if you do".³⁹ So, crossed between them, in a comic cry of authorial distress, narrator Tristram prays to the gracious 'Powers' presiding over 'this vast empire of biographical freebooters',⁴⁰ to "set up a guide-post" at the point where

"Three several roads meet...as they have done Just here".⁴⁰ The narrator, of course, knows very well what to do—namely, to tell it here; and he does so too. But as a humorist he must shake his 'cap and bells' at his critics. Indeed, he never leaves his 'fool's cap' in telling his story.

Dorothy van Ghent ignores this vital and interesting aspect of Sterne's humour, in her otherwise excellent analysis of the structural technique of *Tristram Shandy*.⁴¹ Referring to the scene where the Shandy brothers are slowly coming down the stairs and talking endlessly, and where the author, in Ghent's words, "desperately appeals to the critic to step in and get Uncle Toby and Mr. Shandy off the stairs for him",⁴² (for, as long as the Shandy brothers will be in talking mood his chapter would never end, and his story would not progress), she says—

"Obviously, what has been presented to us in this bit of fantasy is the incongruity between the clock-time which it will take to get the two conversationalists down the stairs, and the temporal time—the 'timeless time'—of the imagination, where the words of Toby and Mr. Shandy echo in their plentitude, where their stances and gestures are traced in precise images (as a leg is lifted, or a foot withdrawn from the step), and where also the resonances of related spirits (such as, Chance and Chapters and critics) intertwine freely with the conversation of Toby and Walter; and we are made aware of the paradox of which Sterne is so acutely aware, and which he 'uses as a selective principle' and as a structural control: the paradox of man's existence both in time and out of time—his existence in the time of the clock, and his existence in the apparent timelessness of consciousness".⁴³

Here Ghent's criticism tends to be overfine, and to 'sail off into abstractions'⁴⁴ (to use a phrase of her own) rather than being objective. Sterne's cries of authorial distress are not so much illustrations of 'time-fantasy', as his comic tricks of establishing easy kinship with his readers, with whom he engages in a dialogue, about his theme and technique, throughout the novel. Our humorist author empolys such tricks to cajole his readers into accepting his departure from the tradition of strict conformity to chronology. Humour, Coleridge

rightly pointed out, suggests 'some peculiarity of individual temperament and character.' ⁴⁴ Humour entered Sterne's creative spirit so entire, because of his abounding love of life. Humour was no mere trick of writing with him; it was an essential element in his personality. A 'loving humour'—Thackeray said—is 'a genial writer's habit of being.' ⁴⁵

V

The humorist on the wrong tack :

Tristram Shandy has been called an unchaste book by some critics. In reply to a correspondent, Sterne refers to such charges of indecency against his work with incisive irony—

"...for the chaste married and chaste unmarried part of the sex—they must not read my book ! Heaven forbid the stock of chastity should be lessened by the Life and Opinions of *Tristram Shandy*—yes, his Opinions—it would certainly debauch' em ! God take them under his protection in this fiery trial, and send us plenty of Duennas, to watch the workings of their humcurs, till they have safely got through the whole work." ⁴⁶

The eminent Richardson, while noting (or, regretting) the great popularity of *T.S.* in London, charged it with 'uncommon indecencies.' ⁴⁷ Goldsmith found in the novel (though he did not name it) 'pertness' and 'the bawdy.' ⁴⁸ In the next century, Thackeray saw in Sterne's work 'a latent corruption—a hint, as of an impure presence'; ⁴⁹ he found 'the foul satyr's eyes' leering 'out of the leaves constantly.' ⁴⁹ And Leslie Stephen, echoing Thackeray, said that Sterne was "always peeping into forbidden corners." ⁵⁰ Walter Scott, however, denied that "the licentious humour of *T.S.* is of the kind which applies itself to the passions or is calculated to corrupt society" ⁵¹ ;

but he added that

"it is a sin against taste, if allowed to be harmless as to morals." ⁵¹

While much of this criticism against Sterne is unfair to the author—arising, as it does, out of his critics' overbearing sense of morality on the one hand, and disregard of the true nature of Sterne's humoristic writing on the other, it cannot be denied that *T.S.* contains some grotesque hints and low jests, which cannot apply to the author's comic intention. They seem to be indulged for sheer fun, and to issue out of a spirit of irresponsible gaiety—a mischievous propensity to tickle our subdued longing for the forbidden. The overflow of the author's free,

gay spirits led him to this indiscretion. A few examples will make this clear.

Early in the novel, in the Shandy parlour the joke on the scientific instrument of Dr. Slop is turned into an indecent suggestion of the forceps taking out the foetus at the hip and the consequent risk of a vital accident.⁵³ The idea, of course, emanates from the foolish Slop, who has a ridiculously low sense of humour, and he also whispers it 'very low to my father'.⁵⁴ Equally vulgar is the suggestion of the cure to the burn of Phutatorius.⁵⁵ Sterne also indulges in 'double entendres' at times—as in the use of the word 'spouts' in Yorick's statement to Trim—"You have cut out spouts enow".⁵⁶ This 'double entendre' with its occasion, namely, the accident of Tristram by the window-sash, comes in between two delightful scenes of comedy—that of the parallel learned and lay orations of Walter Shandy and Trim respectively, and the other of Walter's learned discourses arising out of his *Tristrapaedia*. In such cases, we feel inclined to agree with Leslie Stephen who said that Sterne puts 'filth into a scent bottle'.⁵⁷ Though the amorous episode of Uncle Toby and widow Wadman has been delightfully rendered (Bks. VIII & IX), the author throws in here and there a few unchaste hints—as, for example, where references are made to Toby's wound in the groin and Mrs. Wadman's inquisitiveness (very natural though) about it, motivated by her considerations of matrimony.⁵⁸ That 'just balance betwixt wisdom and folly'.⁵⁹ which marks Sterne's humour, is lacking in such cases.

It appears that Sterne's Renaissance sympathies (as evident in his warm references to Rabelais, Montaigne, Cervantes, frequently in his novel and in his letters, and in his treatment of the theme of procreation⁶⁰—a theme traditionally looked upon with philosophic disdain), laughed to scorn the squeamish code of morality made by 'Prudes and Tartufs'⁶¹ (a code which strains at gnats while swallowing camels).⁶² Even so, Sterne could as well steer clear of such low jests and innuendoes, however fragmentary they may be. Here Sterne was like his Yorick, who with all his good qualities

"had but too many temptations in life, of scattering his wit and his humour,—his gibes and his jests about him".⁶³

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THE BEGGAR'S OPERA AND THE COMIC TRADITION

SANTI RANJAN BANERJEE

THE philosophical foundation of sentimental comedy lies in the belief that a human being, however enslaved by base appetites and devoid of the noble aspirations of the soul, has some elements of the good and the noble imbedded in him which can be nourished and fanned up by proper encouragement. Consequently, to a sentimental comedian, no villain is unredeemable. This view is clearly set forth in the philosophical works of Shaftesbury.¹ He believes that there can be no real or permanent evil in this parmonious universe. Hence every evil-doer may be converted into a good man by a mere appeal to his emotions. Man, according to him, is capable of the highest moral behaviour and the efficacy of a philosophic system must be gauged by its capacity to evoke the highest moral sense in a villain. However given to vicious habits, benevolence is the mainspring of his nature ; so in spite of occasional lapses he will be finally redeemed.

But this concept of the innate goodness of human nature did not meet with a facile acceptance by the leading playwrights of the eighteenth century. They critically examined human nature in the dry light of reason and found it wanting in many respects. They found that if man was noble and generous he could also sink to the lowest depths of meanness and ingratitude. They also came to realize that evil was existent in the scheme of the universe. The innumerable absurdities and contradictions of life which were unknown to the sentimental dramatists like Cibber and Steele rapidly came into light as reason and enquiry began to supplant unquestioned belief and acceptance. Hence the traditional ethical basis of comedy, the belief that the majority of men and women in ordinary life were imperfect creatures, was revived. This view took a fairly long time to gather sufficient impetus in the realm of drama and this explains, to a large extent, why the conflict between sentimental and laughing comedies was a long and hard one.

John Gay seems to be the first eighteenth century playwright to question the ethical basis of sentimental comedy in *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). The play is a biting satire upon hypocrisy, greed, corruption and fraud in all strata of life. Gay clearly perceives the essential conflict between the interests of the common people and those of the cor-

rupt nobility. Although the playwright apparently banters playfully at the excesses of social vices it soon becomes clear to all, provided they are not carried away by the sweeping currents of fun, humour and inventiveness, that beneath the veneer of an enlivening light-heartedness, the author has not been able to conceal the fact that he has like his eminent contemporary Swift, lost faith in the goodness of human nature. Indeed, there is evidence everywhere in the play that Gay has an intention of poking fun at the sentimental dramatists' uncompromising faith in the innate goodness of human nature.

The character of Polly has given rise to much speculation whether the author means to make her a sentimental heroine, or a satirized portrait. Dr Bateson puts the peculiar suggestion that she is equally a character of sentiment and a caricature of sentimentalism.² It seems that the character has given rise to this conflicting opinion since it has not been properly developed in the play. The author subsequently developed this character in a sequel to *The Beggar's Opera*, entitled *Polly* (Printed 1729). A perusal of this playlet confirms the view expressed here. It may be suggested that the relative disregard to which the character has been relegated precludes the possibility of its being a truly sentimental character. A serious, sentimental heroine would never have been placed in the context of a play where everybody is treated satirically and everything is in planned disorder. Moreover, a genuine sentimental heroine is not likely to behave so ludicrously as Polly does in Act II, scene xv; Act III, scene xi and the final scene. She would also not have been put in the uncongenial position of a rival to such a loathsome creature as Lucy.

The language Polly and Lucy use in Act III, scene ix, is apparently a caricature of the excesses of the sentimental style. The screams and exclamations with which their conversations are interspersed suggest the probability of their having been intended as a satirical imitation of the continual flow of sighs and tears of a typical sentimental heroine like Indiana (Steele's *The Conscious Lovers*). Again, in Act I, scene viii Mrs. Peachum faints on hearing that Polly loves Macheath. Here Gay seems to make fun of the ready manner in which sentimental characters fall, or pretend to fall, into swoons on the slightest excitement. Indeed, one of the main efforts of the author appears to be directed against lapses into cheap pathos.

The craving of the contemporary audience for strict adherence to the requirements of poetic justice and the ready and willing compliance of this demand by the sentimental dramatists in utter disregard of the basic principles of drama are cynically parodied in the final scene of the play in course of the conversation between the Beggar and the Player. Nettleton suggests that the double ending of Gay's play is a palpable hit on the conventional happy ending of sentimental plays³.

The Beggar's Opera contains a satirical attack upon sentimental comedy in another respect. The cheap didacticism of sentimental comedy is trenchantly ridiculed by the Beggar at the close of the play. Here Gay ridicules those spurious moralists who make life miserable by their unnecessary emphasis on false values. These people, according to Gay, should be exposed and laughed at without mercy. Although Macheath's life and activities are diametrically opposite to normal social conventions, they are still a correct satirical presentation of actual social conditions and it is no use condemning him unless the false values and rotten conventions of life have been counteracted and proper solutions found for the social, political and moral diseases. The hypocrisy of the double dealers who lure the unwary people by their equivocal presentation of moral problems and occupy covetable positions in society by fraudulent means is set against the "honesty" of the open method of men like Macheath. Viewed in this light the character of Macheath is a sharp satire on all those persons who constantly don the laurels of sham morality and decency. The value of the satire is not minimized by the fact that Gay indulges in it in an apparently festive mood; he wants to provide amusement at the expense of sentimental affectations and false moral standards of his time.

With Gay there appears to have been a marked hostility, both in temperament and in principle, to sentimentalism. Still, he does not seem to have brought a fixed desire of fighting it in the province of drama. There is little evidence in his plays that he wants to initiate a movement protesting against the excesses of sentimental comedy. His aggressive realism constitutes a strong reaction to the various abuses of his time. But the historical value of *The Beggar's Opera*, in its emphasis on humour and laughter in comedy at a time when sentimentalism had been rapidly encroaching upon its province, can hardly be questioned. The enormous success of the play⁴ points out one important thing. Five years earlier *The Conscious Lovers* had been produced with great success and Professor Nicoll has taken this success to be symbolizing the changing tone of the age⁵. But the unique success of *The Beggar's Opera* indicates that only five years later the theatre-loving people were ready to respond approvingly to a play sparkling with laughter and satire.

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RECENT TRENDS OF WORDSWORTH CRITICISM

S. K. DAS

I

THE purpose of this essay is to provide a plan or pattern for the reading of the principal texts of Wordsworth criticism between 1950 and 1970. Wordsworth criticism before 1950 has been reviewed carefully and judiciously in *The English Romantic Poets* (ed. T. M. Raysor, The Modern Language Association of America, N. Y., 1956), the *Cornell Wordsworth Collection : A Catalogue* (ed. G.H. Healey, Ithaca : Cornell, 1957) and in the *Wordsworthian Criticism : A Guide and Bibliography* (J. V. Logan, Columbus : Ohio State, 1947). They provide the reader with the necessary guidelines about the historical development of attitudes towards Wordsworth. But the three bibliographies mentioned above have not been revised and brought up to date. The original author of the article on Wordsworth in *The English Romantic Poets* was Ernest Bernbaum; but he was unable to continue the project because of his illness and his article stands as it was in the first edition except for a few additions made by J.V. Logan. Logan's *Wordsworthian Criticism* may still be considered useful for it lists 661 editions and critical works on the poet published between 1849 and 1944. More recently E. F. Henley and D. H. Stam have jointly edited *Wordsworthian Criticism* (N. Y., 1965) which lists a few more recent books on Wordsworth. As far as I know, this is the latest attempt at offering the reader something like a brief compendium of books on Wordsworth. All books published on Wordsworth after 1960 have not been mentioned here, but this is quite understandable; what is rather disappointing for the reader is that the annotations are very brief. As such they are not very helpful to the reader who wants to select, and there is such an abundance of material on the subject that the problem of selection is unavoidable. The yearly crop of riotous growth shows no signs of a diminishing harvest and during the last ten years there has been considerable addition to Wordsworth criticism. The territory to be surveyed is so terrifying and extensive that only books and articles that have been published after 1950 and which are of more than ephemeral interest to readers will be discussed in this essay. I shall, therefore, avoid an arid listing of names.

Much better texts of Wordsworth's poems have been provided in recent

years. For ordinary purposes the one-volume Hutchinson edition (O.U.P.) is still the most satisfactory. The five-volume works of Wordsworth edited by Selincourt and Helen Darbishire is a monument of scholarship and for serious readers this remains still the most dependable work. *The Prelude* edited by Ernest de Selincourt has been reissued with revisions by Helen Darbishire. Paul M. Zall's *Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth* (Lincoln, 1966) provides a better text with annotations and it supplements the works of Grosart, Knight and N. C. Smith. Zall prints the earliest rather than the latest versions of the various documents published by Wordsworth. Professor J. W. Smyser and O. J. B. Owen are at present busy editing Wordsworth's prose works for the Clarendon Press; they think that no currently available text of Wordsworth's prose works is considered wholly accurate.

No edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* giving all the poems in both volumes has appeared since those of Sampson (1903) and Littledale (1924). The new edition presenting the text as it appeared in 1798 and 1800, together with the variant readings of 1802 and 1805 prepared by R. L. Brett and A.R. Jones (Methuen, 1963) is likely to prove very useful to readers. All relevant materials have been admirably summarised by the editors in their introduction and notes. Some contemporary reactions to the first appearance of the poems are also given in an appendix. Another notable feature of this edition is the scholarly correlation of the different versions of the Preface. Teachers of English literature may have felt the need for such a volume and this be found useful for many years to come.

A curious product of modern research is *The Early Wordsworthian Milieu* (O.U.P., 1958). To the page by page type reproduction of a short notebook of Christopher Wordsworth, the poet's younger brother, Z. S. Fink adds an introductory essay. It presents a complete and carefully annotated text of a hitherto unknown notebook, in which William at the age of fourteen or so entered five bits of prose writing which he probably intended to versify. The notebook comprises some twenty pages and the entries divide into two sections. The first section, of about five pages, is in the poet's handwriting. Evidence in *The Prelude* and elsewhere confirms that it is connected with the earliest period of his poetic activity. The entries in the second section are all by Christopher. There is an interesting note on Wordsworth's projected Latin poem in the Lake District. Christopher and William had much affinity and the editor finds many parallels between these notes and Wordsworth's poems. But it is not a question of Wordsworth borrowing from Christopher or vice versa but of common literary milieu, a milieu embracing various things. The chief purpose of this study is to remind

us to what extent the Wordsworthian synthesis made use of materials "at hand and often conventional." (p.57)

Poets are usually known by the best versions of their works; Wordsworth is often known by the worst. The bulk of Wordsworth's work is still read in reprints of the last edition of his lifetime. Most poems lose by this; but none loses more than *The Ruined Cottage*. This is the contention of Jonathan Wordsworth in *The Music of Humanity* (Nelson, London, 1969). Written in 1797-98 *The Ruined Cottage* was revised several times before being published as Book I of *The Excursion* in 1814. Between January and March 1798, Wordsworth more than doubled the length of the poem, the bulk of his additions consisting of a life history of the Pedlar who tells the main story. The author argues that the two phases of composition produce poetry of radically different kinds. The original poem anticipates *Michael*, the additions reflect *The Prelude*. In the first extant manuscript of the completed poem Wordsworth is said to have decided to separate the two halves. They were later combined and it is impossible to say how long they remained separate in the poet's own mind. Both parts, however, benefit from being considered in isolation and it is this double version that Jonathan Wordsworth has given us. Much emphasis has been laid in this book not only on Wordsworth's technical development but on the extent to which his changing views show the influence of Coleridge. Yet, for all this, there is a consistent and continuing Wordsworth, whose values are unchanged and whose individuality is felt as much in the second part (*The Pedlar*) as in the first (*The Ruined Cottage*).

Apart from this almost apostolic succession of editions, with their concomitants of emendation and illustrative material, recent scholarship has produced editions of the journals and letters of the poet, his sister and his wife. The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth have been edited by Helen Darbishire (*The World's Classics*, 1958) with an introduction and footnotes and an appendix of shorter poems. The volume combines *The Alfoxden Journal* from Knight and *The Grasmere Journal* from the manuscript at Dove Cottage. The introduction gives a general account of the circumstances in which the journals were written and an appreciation of Dorothy. Philip Wayne's *Letters of William Wordsworth* (*World's Classics*, 1954) obviously refers to Selincourt's monumental work in six volumes, but he gives us ample material to follow the major events in the poet's life and to realize his sincerity, modesty, sense of the ridiculous, his toughness and nobility. In recent years Selincourt's edition of *The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth* has been revised by C. L. Shaver (1967). The letters are, however, to be supplemented by Kathleen Coburn's edition of *The Letters of Sarah Hutchinson from 1800 to 1835*

(Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954). She provides us with one of the most intimate pictures we have of the great circle. In addition they rectify the somewhat acid accounts of her given by Hartley and explain why Sarah became so important a member of the Wordsworth family.

Another important member of the circle was Mary who has been overshadowed rather than overlooked in the work of the scholars. Her memoirs and her journal of the 1820 tour were not published till Mary E. Burton edited 178 of the approximately 200 extant letters of Mary Wordsworth (*Letters of Mary Wordsworth*, O. U. P., 1958). Although little has been written of Mary during the early years of their marriage, references to her in Wordsworth's poems are more numerous than one would think. However, we cannot accept Burton's view that Lucy was a composite of Mary and her sister Margaret. Nor can we agree with her over-estimation of the probable influence of Mary on Wordsworth's literary development. She says that with the marriage of the poet, now thirty-two years old, begins the period that produced *The Prelude*, the famous *Immortality Ode*, many of the great sonnets, and *The Excursion*. This is not altogether accurate. *The Prelude* dates from 1798-99; the *Immortality Ode* was begun six months before the marriage; the first of the great sonnets antedate the wedding as does the conception of the philosophical poem of which *The Excursion* was a part. Actually Wordsworth wrote almost nothing of importance for fifteen months after marriage. The value of Mary Burton's book, however, lies in the intimate picture it gives us of the poet's household from 1820 to 1850. The letters reveal that she was quietly aware of her strength and never admitted an inferiority to any of the members of the Wordsworth circle. She was deeply sympathetic, had an independent mind and was severely critical of those who earned her disapproval. Nothing in this volume informs us of the "phantom of delight" that surprised Wordsworth. But there was in her much of the "angelic light" and nowhere does it shine more brilliantly than in the last letter that Burton chooses for her book. Writing to Susan Wordsworth thirteen days after Dorothy's death, Mary declares: "This being a bright morning, I feel a desire to tell you and dear Chris: with my own Pen, that notwithstanding the void that must henceforth remain at my heart, I shall never feel thankful for the Almighty's goodness for having spared me to be the solitary lingerer, rather than the beloved sufferer now laid at rest and whose restless spirit I humbly trust is now among the Blessed, in the bosom of her heavenly Father."

Interest in the journals of the members of the Wordsworth circle has produced another important work. Collette Clarke's *Home at Grasmere*

(Penguin, 1959) is a novel attempt at collating Dorothy's journals with her brother's poems. Indeed the relation between the journals and the poems is so close that in most cases the problem of original invention remains unsolved. The study is of necessity selective and where the reference is casual and the poem long or remote, it has been omitted. Opposite the journal entry of 9 March 1802, *The Ruined Cottage* is printed in its original form, although the poem referred to in the journals was probably closer to the first book of *The Excursion* as we have it now.

The interest in the letters and journals is as strong today as it was during the early years of Wordsworthian scholarship. De Quincey's letters to Wordsworth and his family have been edited by John E. Jordan (*De Quincey to Wordsworth: Biography of a Relationship*, California Univ. Press, 1962). The replies have not been included, but the stages of their acquaintance have each been introduced by biographical chapters which fill in the gaps and supply many details of the largely unsatisfactory relationship. De Quincey's hopes of establishing a friendship on something like equal terms were shattered. His first visit to Grasmere in 1807 was not successful, although he was admitted to a large degree of intimacy with the Wordsworth family. It is interesting to see that De Quincey's letters were subsequently addressed more often to Dorothy than to William and were ingratiating in tone. In one of those letters De Quincey gives a graphic description of the Drury Lane fire in 1809. De Quincey's failure to see the *Convention of Cintra* through the press produced a cooling in Wordsworth's attitude to him. The chief causes, however, were De Quincey's addiction to opium and the circumstances of his marriage. This developments alienated Dorothy and Sarah Hutchinson and produced corresponding reactions from De Quincey himself. Although Wordsworth helped De Quincey to the editorship of *The Westmoreland Gazette* in 1818, the breach was never properly healed. De Quincey's revelations in the *Tait's Magazine* in which he "took a sort of public vengeance" on Wordsworth made it complete, but their correspondence had already ceased.

A new trend of recent studies on Wordsworth is the preoccupation with the chronology of the poet's work. M. L. Reed writes: "If a full-scale chronology is desirable for any English Author, Wordsworth's claim to such treatment is proportionately large." (*Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Early Years 1770-1799*, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1967). Two more volumes are in preparation. As Reed points out, the problem of preparing such a work is twofold. First, there is the problem posed by the dearth of primary facts about certain periods, and secondly, there is the problem resulting from the wealth of general

comment and speculation. Reed bases his conclusions on the degree and quality of documentation available, rather than on the attractiveness of the theory proposed. He carefully weighs the evidences and sifts his material. The value of such a work that provides a readily accessible compendium of fact and theory about Wordsworth's life is sufficiently obvious.

II

Wordsworth's poetry has found a large number of critics and interpreters, but it does not appear that his biography is in any danger of being overlooked or attracting less attention than it did in the past. It was habitual with Wordsworth to review and revise his emotions, thoughts and utterances. He was always trying to reach a clearer vision of the whole truth and its most perfect expression. Such an organic-creative nature cannot be easily interpreted. A poet's life is not reducible barely to facts and clearcut systematic divisions. Good biography remains a difficult art demanding vision and judgment. Two biographies in recent years may be said to have achieved this. Helen Darbishire's *Wordsworth* (British Council Pamphlet, 1953) brings out the "rootedness", the Northern quality of sternness, toughness and austerity in the poet's character which, however, did not overshadow his passionate tenderness for friends and family. She stresses the passion and power of Wordsworth's observation and uses *The Leech Gatherer* as providing the characteristic approach to his poetry. She does not analyse the mystical experiences of *The Prelude*; she emphasizes rather the practical implications of his vision, which makes *The Excursion* a great ethical poem. Darbishire also notes the poet's leaning towards Christianity, but there is no equivalent poetic rendering of his religious faith. Mary Moorman's biography of the poet (*William Wordsworth*, 2 vols, Oxford, 1957 & 1965) is authoritative and it seeks to correct the distortions caused by too much speculation and theory. In recent years Wordsworth's biography has been written by what may be described as the psycho-analytical school of writers. Modern psychological knowledge is a useful aid to human studies of any kind, but psychological evidence is only one kind of evidence among many. It can be easily misinterpreted and biography can be reduced to an analyst's case-book. Moorman has avoided the psycho-analytic approach; she has assembled all the available evidence and has tried to establish the relative importance of facts, surmises and possibilities with which she has to deal. *The Prelude* forms, naturally, the basis of her account and she accepts it fully, maintaining that although Wordsworth sometimes telescoped events, he never

invented material for the poem. Her task has been to discover the correct sequence, for her view is that Wordsworth was often guilty of chronological inexactitude. Moorman has also made full use of the letters, journals, tabletalks, and poems. She cannot claim to have discovered many new facts about Wordsworth, but the function of research is not the discovery of startling facts. The terrain of Wordsworth's biography still contains some unexplored areas such as what he did in Paris in 1792 and whether he returned to Paris in 1793. Moorman's most important new discovery is Wordsworth's acquaintance with Godwin in 1795, revealed in Godwin's diaries. She has also thrown new light on the poet's school days, on the Racedown and Alfoxden periods and on his winter sojourn in Germany. Her analysis of Wordsworth's recovery from the Annette affair is particularly illuminating. As a biographer her interest in the poems chiefly concerns such problems as the date and the circumstances of their composition, or points of interpretation having a bearing on the poet's life. She has not imposed a particular point of view but by setting down everything that is known or has been suggested, she has admirably served the interests of the students of Wordsworth's life and poetry. Wordsworth's later poetry according to Moorman is of high artistic merit and very little of it is entirely commonplace or dull, a view which Edith Batho and B. Groom have been trying to establish. She rejects the image of Wordsworth in later life as a morose and intolerably conceited recluse. Wordsworth according to her was a faithful and affectionate friend, the devoted though overanxious brother, father and husband, a kind host, the sage of Rydal and the man of letters whose conversation younger men loved to listen to. Moorman's poet has few literary prejudices and he appears as the champion of compassion and humanity. She says, however, that Wordsworth's memories of the French Revolution and the Jacobin terror never ceased to haunt him, and he often looked back too much to the happier world of his own youth. Knight's biography has been imperceptive; the Bishop of Lincoln's *Memoirs* is partial and protective and is hardly integrated into any literary form; Harper is hag-ridden by the distinction between the early Wordsworth, who was a liberal and wrote great poetry and the later Wordsworth, who developed all the wrong political ideas and wrote badly. Moorman's biography is fair and the students of Wordsworth have been placed immeasurably in her debt.

Annette Vallon has often been cited as the Venus Pandemus of Wordsworth's life and the episode has often been regarded as the most decisive influence on Wordsworth's literary career. This view, however, has been exploded thoroughly by C. H. Patton (*The Rediscovery of Wordsworth*, pp.

202-216), R. D. Havens (*The Mind of a Poet*, 2 vols, Baltimore, 1941, pp. 508-513), W. L. Sperry (*Wordsworth's Anti-Climax*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1935), and A.L. Stout ("Wordsworth's Desiccation", MLR. 1940). None of these writers accepts the extreme accusations of G. McLean Harper, E.H. Legouis, Herbert Read and Hugh I'A. Fausset.

Continuing interest in the two great figures of Romantic Poetry is typified by H.M. Margoliouth's book *Wordsworth and Coleridge* (O.U.P., 1953) on the personal and literary relationship between Wordsworth and Coleridge from their first meeting until Coleridge's death. The work is mainly biographical and it is useful to have the story of what each was doing year by year clearly laid out. There is also an account of the influence of Dorothy, but there is no exaggeration. Margoliouth speaks of her 'unspotted' love and friendship for Wordsworth, and adds that Dorothy loved Coleridge, but was not in love with him. Coleridge's marriage failed not because of her or Sarah Hutchinson, but because his wife was unsympathetic. Lucy, according to Margoliouth, was Margaret Hutchinson who died of consumption in 1796 and the *Immortality Ode* originated from a conflict between Wordsworth the celibate devoted to poetry and Wordsworth the betrothed man. He gives an account of the development and revisions of such poems as *Christabel*, the *Dejection Ode* and *The Recluse*. The story of their gradual alienation makes sad reading, but it was unavoidable since Coleridge's return from Malta a greatly changed individual. Marriage had also brought changes in the Wordsworth family and both in the end failed each other.

III

It is difficult to clarify the main tendencies in the huge mass of Wordsworth criticism. Now it may be relevant here to refer to those studies which are mainly concerned with his ideas and to postpone the consideration of those mainly concerned with the aesthetics of his work. Beatty's work on Wordsworth's doctrine and art (Madison, 1928) neglected the religious and metaphysical implications which Hartley attached to what would otherwise have been a purely rationalistic psychology. This deficiency in Beatty's admirable pioneering work has been supplied by recent scholars like M. Rader and N. P. Stallknecht. Rader's revised version, *Wordsworth: A Philosophical Approach* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1967) examines the fundamental ideas underlying Wordsworth's poetry, relating his thought to the vicissitudes of his life, to the influence of his friendship with Coleridge, and to the major traditions of philosophy. Rader focuses almost exclusively on the poetry written from 1797 to 1807. He traces the

internal coherence in the total body of this work, demonstrating its philosophical sources and affinities. Indirectly Rader seeks to refute Bateson's implication of a sharp dualism of head and heart in Wordsworth's poetry. Wordsworth may have been primarily a feeler, but his feelings were deeply interfused with thought. Wordsworth's doctrines may be said to have played a major role in the development of romanticism and cannot be neglected by the historian of ideas. Dissatisfied with a dualistic metaphysics, Wordsworth softened its traditional sharp distinction between appearance and reality, mind and matter, body and soul. He was convinced that analytical reason is inadequate to portray the integrality and flow of experience. His poetry answers the need of the human spirit. Rader's view is also different from the extreme views of Legouis and Harper, who maintain that Wordsworth is intellectually a son of Rousseau and a disciple of Hartley. My interpretation is that Wordsworth was a bold thinker gathering ideas from many sources and adapting them freely to his own purposes. He was never the slave of a particular philosophy; he was far too great to be enslaved by any doctrine.

Reacting against the somewhat narrow interpretation of Wordsworth presented by Beatty, N. P. Stallknecht comes to the conclusion that Wordsworth was influenced by various other thinkers like Plotinus, Bruno, Spinoza, Boehme, and Kant. Stallknecht finds Jacob Boehme a more significant figure than Spinoza in Wordsworth's poetry. The first edition of the book has been revised and the new edition (*Strange Seas of Thought*, Bloomington, 1958) records a few changes. He newly recognizes the relevance of the Roman stoicism to the understanding of the philosophical pattern of the ideas in *Ode to Duty* and in *The Excursion*. These two works have been thought to reflect the moral philosophy of Kant, centred on a doctrine of duty or rational obligation. References to Seneca had been thought to be merely casual. Stallknecht maintains that Wordsworth's philosophy of Duty was no mere revival of ancient stoicism, but showed noticeable developments. Although the concept of an active principle is central to such works as Cicero's *De Natura Decorum*, Wordsworth's idea had much more in common with Shaftesbury. Stallknecht has also shown that it is not philosophically or scientifically preposterous to base one's reflections about life upon individual experiences and to draw from them idealistic conclusions concerning man's relationship to the universe. A. N. Whitehead had maintained that position 45 years ago (*Science and the Modern World*, Chapter 5); but Stallknecht restates the case with much fuller evidence and elaborate reasonings. Another important point stressed is that Wordsworth's belief concerning the creative imagination involve assumptions which depend upon religious faith, partly exemplified

by Boehme. His assertion that Wordsworth was directly influenced by Boehme's ideas is, however, untenable.

The chronological closeness of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) and the *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (1797) by Schelling indicates an astonishing spiritual closeness between Wordsworth and Schelling. The near congruence of the two dates, 1797 and 1798 may not prove the existence of a homogenous *Zeitgeist*, but the similarity of the two writers does lend force to the view that romanticism is a meaningful historical term, a view which Wellek has defended against Lovejoy's discrimination of romanticisms. (*PMLA*, 1924, pp. 229-53 ; *Comparative lit*, 1949, pp. 1-23, 147-72). The similarities cannot be explained by positing an influence of Schelling on Wordsworth, but this is what E. D. Hirsch does in his book, *Wordsworth and Schelling* (New Haven, 1960). As to direct influence Wordsworth knew too little German to have a firsthand acquaintance with Schelling. In his later life he was content to announce that he had "never read a word of German metaphysics, thank heaven" (*Correspondence of Crabb Robinson*, ed. Morley, Oxford, 1927, Vol I, p. 401). Although Wordsworth read Kant, Schelling and Fichte in later life (round about 1844) it is reasonable to assume that Schelling's ideas did not influence Wordsworth's fundamental attitudes. They may have developed independently an identical *Weltanschauung*. Hirsch's approach is what descriptive psychology describes as 'typification'. He attempts not to describe a species of romanticism but to construct a type of romantic outlook. Such a type may function as a leading idea, which allows the students to examine minutely an individual mind in all its complexity without losing sight of the whole. His discussion of the *Immortality Ode* (chapter 7) demonstrates that a typological study used flexibly can be helpful in penetrating textual meaning. He has, however, succeeded in avoiding the danger that one may come to see only the type in every text so that the latter becomes merely an illustrative document.

The preoccupation with the ideas behind Wordsworth's poetry has led to an examination of the importance of Unitarianism in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's thought. H. W. Piper in *The Active Universe* (London, 1962) traces the displacement of the Newtonian system by activist concepts of the universe. The author discusses Coleridge's modest beginnings in *Religious Musings* and *The Destiny of Nations*. The influences of Priestley and Darwin on Coleridge have been emphasized. The early history of Wordsworth's thought is vague, since *The Prelude* is unreliable on this point. But there are evidences that his unitarian contacts had led him to formulate ideas not dissimilar to Coleridge's before his move to Alfoxden. He also discovers what he claims to be new contemporary sources of

Wordsworth's pantheism, and incidentally traces the influence of *The Excursion* in Byron, Shelley and Keats.

The political ideal of the poet has also been recently discussed in a study *Politics and the Poet* (Methuen, 1958) by F. M. Todd. He tries to show that the poet's change did not indicate a betrayal of his early ideals. On the contrary they imply a fuller realization of their significance brought about by the political experience in England and America. Todd brings together a mass of evidence, some familiar, others less known, to reveal the stages by which Wordsworth came to regard the war against Napoleon as England's supreme test of greatness. Wordsworth's slow transition from radical to Tory positions, his attitude to the Whigs and his long-lasting reservations about the Tories have never before been set forth with such clarity, particularization and careful analysis. After his brother's death the need for fortitude in bereavement led him away from political reform to a new egalitarianism of the spirit by which the sources of real happiness could be explored. Todd tells us that Wordsworth opposed the Reform Bill not from blind reaction but from reasoned doubts; and when his fears proved baseless his opposition ceased. To readers of Wordsworth's biography the merit of this book lies in its presentation of relevant material and events in their contemporary significance.

IV

It is perplexing to find that critics widely divergent from one another in temperament should all be interested in the same poet and consider Wordsworth worthy of sustained and serious study. The realists have probably overemphasized the objective elements; and the mystics, the subjective. Taken together, however, they bear witness to the extraordinary scope and variety of Wordsworth's poetry. We may now begin our reconnaissance of the sacred wood with F. W. Bateson's *Wordsworth: A Re-interpretation* (1954; revised 1963). Bateson's whole thesis rests on J. K. Stephen's parody of Wordsworth. He perceives 'two voices', the Augustan realistic objective poetry of the ballad and the narrative class, and the subjective reflective Romantic type. The best poetry occurs when the two voices meet. However, Bateson laments they do not meet often because psychological disturbances kept breaking this balance splitting Wordsworth's personality. But this can be hardly acceptable for such a view reduces the poet to a sort of literary Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. It is a pity that a great deal of perceptive elucidation of many poems have been allowed to be overshadowed by dubious psychological assumptions. Bateson is illuminating about the shorter poems written before 1802, and the conflic-

ting social and religious pressures on the poet. He concludes that so far from surrendering to the neurotic elements in his personality, as so many romantic poets have done, Wordsworth's early life was one long struggle against them.

Thus Bateson states his case from a biographical and psychological approach, whereas John Jones (*The Egotistical Sublime*, London, 1954) develops his ideas through the aesthetic and philosophical medium. His construct is sounder and is based on the rejection of psycho-analytical methods. He traces with valuable comments on style three stages in the growth of the poet's mind, from a poetry of 'solitude and relationship' through a middle period of 'indecision' to the 'baptised imagination'. The first part of the scheme is worked out with delicate perception of Wordsworth's 'thought in sense'. The second reflects the dissociation of the poet's intellect and his vision, related to doubts about the nature of man and the self which result often in a sacrifice of the universal and the particular for the merely general. In the third stage Wordsworth can assent no longer to the literalness of the natural order and its moral-poetic power. He is trying to write transcendental poetry, to tell the tales of the invisible world. But the real value of Jones's book is independent of the thesis he offers. It is rich in perceptions of individual aspects of the poet's art. His examination of the 'reality-metaphors'—winds, echoes and water images—is a fine piece of literary criticism. Jones however, sees the loss of sensibility as due to a loss of gradual dulling of his mind brought to a climax by the sudden loss of his brother in 1805. This may be regarded as an oversimplification. Furthermore, he denies lyricism to Wordsworth, but can we entirely deny this?

More subtle but sometimes obscure interpretations are to be found in Geoffrey Hartman's book *The Unmediated Vision* (Yale Univ. Press, 1954). In a series of essays he links Wordsworth with Hopkins, Rilke, and Valéry as examples of a peculiarly modern way of looking at life and art. He seeks to establish a special kind of approach—directed towards complete interpretation. The final chapter "The New Perseus" is a discussion of the problem of the modern poet, understanding experience in its immediacy. Hartman's other book on Wordsworth (*Wordsworth's Poetry*, Yale Univ. Press, 1964) is a long dissertation on the role of nature as a negative force impeding the development of the poet. He argues that the growth of the poet's mind (he calls it 'maturation') was a matter of conflict between the influence of external nature and the stirring of his visionary imagination. There are many passages in the poems of Wordsworth to suggest that his "consciousness of self raised to apocalyptic pitch" momentarily overcame the compelling power of the outward scene. But

the vision falters and Wordsworth returns to the familiar. Hartman says that Wordsworth could have been a great poet but for this return to nature, this shrinking from the visionary subjects. The book has three divisions: In the first the thesis has been stated and is illustrated from *The Highland Reaper*, *There Was a Boy*, and *Tintern Abbey*. In the second its implications are discussed with reference to *The Prelude*. The last which is also the longest examines the great body of Wordsworth's poetry from *An Evening Walk* to *The Excursion* in the light of his thesis. His views have, however, been contradicted by Michael Irwin in "Wordsworth's Despondency Sublime" (EC, 1964).

Wordsworth's role as a poet of nature has steadily diminished for many years. J. F. Danby in his book *The Simple Wordsworth* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960) emphasizes the subordinate role that external nature plays in Wordsworth's poetry. The basic concern of the poet is with the transactions that take place between the living person and the environment, which Danby calls 'dynamic Hartleyanism.' Danby occasionally introduces a degree of sophistication to Wordsworth criticism. Simon Lee, he says, reveals a 'delicacy of shift'; the narrator in *The Thorn* is a device whereby the varying flow of our experience is controlled; in the Gosler poems a great variety of poetic methods have been adopted; and in the Matthew poems 'animal delight and animal decay are brought together'. Danby's other book on Wordsworth (*William Wordsworth: The Prelude and Other Poems*, Edward Arnold, 1963) is a brief introduction to the poet, written possibly with the idea of helping undergraduate students of English literature.

Colin Clarke's thesis *Romantic Paradox* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) is that as Wordsworth was preoccupied with the interaction between the mind and the senses, he showed a predilection not only for the word 'image' but also for the word 'form' and to a less extent the word 'shape'. He illustrates this by an examination of passages from *Tintern Abbey*, *The Prelude*, and the *Immortality Ode*. He also shows that the poet used these words equivocally and it was so because of his conviction that the natural world was solid and substantially other than the mind, and the mind had to come to terms with his conviction that what we perceive is inevitably mind-dependent. Thus Wordsworth's language in *The Prelude* and elsewhere embodies a more subtle play of the mind than is usually conceded.

The modern tendency is to find in Wordsworth's poetry a degree of complexity which eluded the earlier critics. Alec King (*Wordsworth and the Artist's Vision*, London, 1966). King treats of Wordsworth's poetry as the poetry of vision. For him to see is an ambiguous word in Words-

worth's poetry. Sight, he points out, is at once a function of the bodily eye and the bodiless mind and so he traces the interaction between sight and insight in Wordsworth's poetry. Christopher Salvesen (*The Landscape of Memory*, Edward Arnold, 1965) shows that the working of memory make their first fully subjective appearance in English literature in the poetry of Wordsworth. They provide a useful and illuminating insight into some of his best poetry. Wordsworth's influence on Keats is also the subject of a study by Thora Balslev (*Keats and Wordsworth*, Copenhagen, 1962). It is chiefly aimed at detecting Wordsworthian echoes in Keats's poetry and by examining the variations between echo and source the author seeks to clarify the difference between the poets.

The characteristic Romantic uncertainty due to a loss of a sense of order in the universe and the need of the poet to replace it by a system of his own form the basis of a study by David Perkins (*The Quest for Permanence*, Harvard, 1959). Perkins cites three poets Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats as supplying three different resolutions of the anxieties created by the need for permanence. He explores Wordsworth's acute awareness of the distance between mankind and the rest of the creation—the isolation of the human mind which is not only the difference between brevity and permanence, but also between confusion and calm. He suggests that this isolation is represented by the solitaries and outcasts in his poetry and the children stand for man in the opposite situation. In his other book (*Wordsworth and Poetry of Sincerity*, Harvard, 1964) Perkins examines the feelings behind the poetry of Wordsworth. Poetry since Wordsworth reveals a continuing temptation to confuse sincerity with originality, and then originality with idiosyncrasy, as though one were most oneself by being most unlike other people. Sincerity can only exist by solidifying a moment in the flux of consciousness. It demands from the poet a special kind of tool for the expression of his ideas. The results are sometimes spectacular for they include the extreme elipsis of Hopkins, the country dialect, archaisms, neologisms and gawky compounds of Hardy, the obvious melodiousness of Swinburne, or the peculiarities of Cummings and Pound. Wordsworth's characteristic mode is incremental repetitions and the proliferation of conjunctions and prepositions. Wordsworth's sincerity as a poet is discussed in relation to his process of composition, the audience and the inadequacy of the language.

Interpreting the poet according to a formula that seems disquietingly neat is to be found in David Ferry's book, *The Limits of Mortality* (Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1959). Throughout his argument Ferry offers propositions that will startle most readers of Wordsworth. Yet this is an

interesting study. He points out admirably the ambivalence of Wordsworth's attitude towards Nature and hence towards man. 'The sacramentalists' view of Nature, in which Nature is regarded as the symbol of eternity, runs counter to the 'mystical' view in which Nature becomes an obstruction between the poet and his experience of the transcendental. His reading of Wordsworth's poetry culminate, appropriately, in a fine appraisal of the Snowdon scene in *The Prelude*, in which the sacramental and the mystical images of nature stand opposed to one another as emblems of the contest that rages in his imagination. In certain poems such as *To the Cuckoo* the two visions are brought into a perilous poise. Some poems present the contrast between the two views ; in others they are fused. Lucy, for example, is both temporal and eternal and *A Slumber* is at the centre of the poet's art.

A handful of critics, notably Dicey, Burton and Batho have argued that Wordsworth underwent no basic change in his thinking ; but this view has few adherents. Their works have value as correctives to some extreme views of Wordsworth's change of attitude but each of them employs special pleading, and to the extent that they do so, they vitiate their studies. W. L. Sperry in his book *Wordsworth's Anti-Climax* (revised edition, Russell & Russell, N. Y., 1966) corroborates Garrod's view that the last forty years of Wordsworth's life are the most dismal anti-climax of which the history of literature holds record. The work of the last thirty or forty years can be praised only at the expense of that of the eight or ten years after 1797. We do best, says Sperry, to trust the instinct which inclines us to the earlier work. However, the causes of this anti-climax are obscure and no single solution is convincing. Each is made plausible by ignoring stubborn facts which point in other directions. Wordsworth refuses to be neatly dissected in the critical laboratory. But the more clearly we understand the causes of his rise and fall as an artist, the deeper will be our insight into his best work. Chapter eight of Sperry's book summarises his views. But what he says about the poet's 'preposterous confidence in infancy' (p. 134) is not convincing enough. Sperry imputes the fall from the heights to the doctrinaire elements in Wordsworth's poetry. There is nothing new in this assertion, for this is not very different from Jeffrey's view (*The Edinburgh Review*, XXIV, p. 2). Sperry elaborates the view thus : "Wordsworth's decline was a foredoomed conclusion to his life as a poet, given his technical premises and the restricted subjects which were his patrimony from the earlier years of simple sensations and ideas." (p. 142)

Brief general introductions to the poet and his art are *Wordsworth* by Carl Woodring (Harvard, 1968) and *William Wordsworth* by Geoffrey

Durrant (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969). Woodring claims that much of what he says on Wordsworth is new. But it would not be unfair to say that it is a general critical introduction based on several earlier studies of the poet. He discusses the major poems and excludes the minor ones. But some of his observations are interesting. For instance, he says that Chatterton "trying to catch an easy market, invented the medieval poetry of Rowley and added to its meretricious interest by his own suicide." (p. 3) *The Vale of Esthwaite*, Woodring says, has a touch of the sentimentally erotic—the poor woman has swanlike breasts of snow. (p. 9) Wordsworth produced verse that he did well to keep in a cool dark place. (p. 11). The doctrinal poems of the *Lyrical Ballads* are "gnomic, pedagogic, mnemonic—'Thirty days hath September' raised to the *n*th power" (p. 40). Durrant's account is more balanced. He simply tries to see why Wordsworth is great. He sets out to show this clearly with detailed reference to particular poems. Professor Durrant reviews the great creative period of Wordsworth's life from 1798 to 1805. He examines representative poems in close details and builds up a cumulative sense of Wordsworth's preoccupations, showing how he employed his characteristic imagery and how relevant his poetry is to modern readers.

A refreshing departure from the scholarly and critical approach to Wordsworth's poetry is to be found in Russell Noyes's book *Wordsworth and the Art of Landscape* (Indiana Univ. Press, 1968). The work is based on a direct study of original texts, landscape paintings, gardens and scenery. His purpose is to examine Wordsworth's principles and practices in the art of landscape in painting, gardening, travel and poetry, both as they relate to his eighteenth-century predecessors and as they are revealed in his work. Noyes analyses the art of landscape painting before Wordsworth and examines the ideas on the picturesque from Gilpin's writings. Some of Gilpin's ideas are similar to Wordsworth's. For instance Gilpin says: "Often when slumber has half-closed the eyes, and shut out all the objects of the sense, especially after the enjoyment of some splendid scene, the imagination active and alert, collects its scattered ideas, transposes, combines, and shifts them into a thousand forms, producing... exquisite scenes." (*Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty*, 3rd edition, London, 1808, p. 54. Quoted by Noyes). The preoccupation with the picturesque often produced satirical sketches in prose and verse. Noyes quotes from a satire on travel for the sake of seeing wild scenery:

I'll make a TOUR—and then I'll WRITE it
I'll parse it here, I'll verse it there
And picturesque it everywhere.

(Canto I, 122, 127-28. *William Combe's The Tour of Dr. Syntax*)

Wordsworth, however, transcended the limitations of the picturesque and offered to the quickened sensibilities of his readers various, intimate and subtle interpretations of the natural world. As a schoolboy through his reading of the eighteenth century authors Wordsworth had become familiar with the tradition of poetical landscape description and of topographical poetry, which he turned to good account in *Evening Walk* and by the time he composed *Descriptive Sketches* he seems to have become well versed in the standards of taste in landscape painting and in the picturesque and the sublime. Noyes also traces the influence of George Beaumont, John Constable and John Turner on Wordsworth. A picturesque feature commonly found in paintings and used by Wordsworth was the addition of figures which harmonised with the general character of the landscape. In *An Evening Walk* the human and animal inhabitants, the shepherds and dogs, the muleteers and their trains, the peasant and his horse, all enhance the pastoral calm. Chapter five ("The Art of Landscape in Wordsworth's Poetry", pp. 198-250) points out the difference between the traditionalist and Wordsworthian approach to nature. Noyes shows that Wordsworth often chooses language that describes human condition and emotions and impregnates natural and inanimate objects with them. The study concludes with the assertion that Wordsworth may be given the highest place in the tradition of landscape poetry, the poetry of Homer, Virgil, Theocritus, Keats, Tennyson and Frost.

V

Several studies on the poetry of the Romantics have appeared recently and all of them have devoted a considerable portion of their studies to Wordsworth's poetry. Harold Bloom's book on Romantic poetry (*The Visionary Company*, Faber & Faber, London, 1962) begins with an exposition of Blake's mythology and proceeds to trace Blake's themes through the major Romantic poets and some minor ones. Bloom observes that Blake and these poets can be read with profit in and each other's company, for their problems, themes, and resources are nearly the same. He compares Blake and Wordsworth, suggesting that the difference between them was that "Wordsworthian Man is Freudian Man, but Blake's Human Form Divine is not." However, he does not follow this scheme very closely, and the main portion of his book is devoted to analysis of some of the major Romantic poems. R. A. Foakes's study (*The Romantic Assertion*, Methuen, 1958) maintains that the twentieth century world is still the world of the Romantic in so far as it seems anarchic. The present age also offers no solutions to the problems in visions of cosmic harmony, but

deals with the resolution of contradictions within a strictly limited piece of experience. Foakes also refers to the modern critic's aversion to the long poem of the nineteenth century where images from the natural world were used as systems of symbols to convey a vision of spiritual order. He examines the two most recurring images—life as a journey in time and the image of love symbolizing higher union—from *The Prelude*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *In Memoriam*, *Men & Women*, the poetry of Arnold and *The City of Dreadful Night* to show that whereas in the Romantics the vision becomes the reality and the real world fades, in the Victorians the world remains real and the vision becomes detached. The book may be regarded as a companion volume to Frank Kermode's book *Romantic Image* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, reprinted from the 1957 version). The relevance of Foakes's title is found in his statement (p. 112) that "this poetry of assertion inevitably employs rhetoric in order to persuade us that the poet's vision is real, and to make us believe in its power and value." Foakes develops this point and argues that the "rhetoric of assertion is appropriate only to the true visionary utterance. ...But the rhetorical vocabulary used in the discussion of general problems now seems empty and barren, for it is unsupported by the central imagery or the central theme of the poem, and is not subsumed, as Tennyson wanted it to be, in a total vision." (pp. 137-38).

A very subjective, interesting, aggressive and sophisticated book on the Romantics is E. E. Bostetter's work, *The Romantic Ventriloquists* (Univ. of Washington Press, 1963). He substantiates his clear prejudice by considerable scholarship. Bostetter belongs to the tradition of I. Babbitt and H. N. Fairchild; in fact he is the last of the anti-Romantics. He argues that the Romantics were tempted too often to bridge discrepancies between the ideal and the real by mere poetry, by "consolatory magic, dreamy self-delusion and rationalization". They are always lying because they are always affirming. The Romantics are not prophets but ventriloquists who project their own voices as the voice of the ultimate truth.

Karl Kroeber in *The Artifice of Reality* (Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1964) isolates certain components of Romanticism, and seeks to reclaim for Romanticism, with these as its foundation, something of its former authority as an effective civilising agent. He cites the causes—the failure of a fixed social and political order, and the displacement of a mimetic by an expressive orientation in poetry—responsible for the seemingly compulsive tendency to generalize upon Romanticism. Some of his observations are already well known to readers of Romantic poetry. In the chapter entitled "The Temporization of Space" the author discusses *Tintern Abbey* and a series of poems by Leopardi—*The Infinite*, *To the Moon*, and

Sunday Evening to show how spatial configurations whose expansiveness may well tend to diminish our sense of human worth and accomplishment become psychologically manageable by being compounded with the purely mental forms of time. He points out that the departure from customary habits of perception and their replacement by special forms of cognition—dreams, visions and mystical illuminations—frequently seemed at variance with the poet's more prosaic obligations to his fellowmen. Kroeber seems to be too rigidly bound by his thesis. To speak of poems as contradictory as *Tintern Abbey* and *To the Moon* as much alike because of a similar use of creative memory or to lodge together such works as *To Silvia*, *Resolution and Independence*, *Eve of St. Agnes*, and *To Autumn* as equivalent examples of secular myth is to employ categories that are too broad.

Another recent study that considers some of the major Romantic poets as a group is Brian Wilkie's book *The Romantic Poets and Epic Tradition* (Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1965). The similarities between the long poem in the Romantic era and its epic forbears have been, as Wilkie points out, rather neglected. He defines the epic tradition, avoids theoretical entanglements and establishes the major thesis that provides the basis for the critical discussions that follow. Four chapters form the bulk of the work; each centres on a major work of Wordsworth (*The Prelude*), Shelley (*The Revolt of Islam*), Keats (*Hyperion*), and Byron (*Don Juan*). According to Wilkie *The Prelude* resembles the epic pattern of ordeal and progress and has a particular affinity to the great myth of primal innocence, fall, and regeneration. It is an epic of inner struggle culminating in a discovery; the power of the consecrated soul is restored to gracious communion with itself and nature. The study is useful because it goes beyond the superficial devices of the epic convention and uncovers the broad pattern of design and movement that suggest meaningful analogies with the great epic themes of the past. He is less convincing when he attempts to interpret the powers of nature and books in Wordsworth's poem as epic machinery or to portray a choir of redbreasts and a glow-worm as epic omens.

VI

One of the more interesting recent trends in the study of Wordsworth is an examination of his art from various approaches. Critics are increasingly being concerned with the study of his use of words, his images, his symbols, and his 'inscrutable workmanship'. Helen Darbishire's *The Poet Wordsworth* (Oxford, revised 1962) and Lascelles Abercrombie's

The Art of Wordsworth (Oxford, London, 1952) have many discriminating remarks on style and manner. But there are more specialised studies than these. Florence Marsh's *Wordsworth's Imagery* (Yale Univ. Press, 1952) attempts a systematic exposition of Wordsworth's imagery. She concludes that the function of the image or metaphor in Wordsworth's poetry is neither complex nor startling. Marsh shows that the characteristics of individual metaphor or simile in Wordsworth's poetry are negative. Metaphors do not usually control the structure of Wordsworth's poem. It is not characteristic of Wordsworth to sustain a metaphor long or to use a metaphor or simile as an organic device. Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction has also been thoroughly investigated in B. Groom's *The Diction of Poetry from Spencer to Bridges* (Univ. of Toronto Press 1960) and in Josephine Miles's *Wordsworth and the Vocabulary of Emotion* (Octagon Books, N. Y., 1965. Revised.). Even some modern critics who are hostile to Wordsworth usually admit the soundness of his eagerness to recall poetry to its mission as a truthful interpreter of the meaning of life in unbookish diction by a selection of language really used by men. Roger Murray (*Wordsworth's Style*, Nebraska Univ. Press, 1967) examines some poems in the *Lyrical Ballads* in order to demonstrate how delicately Wordsworth's language responds at the level of grammar and diction to the pulse of feeling. He tries to show how the characteristic use of language reflects his insight into the life of things. For instance something of what Wordsworth meant by this expression is revealed by his use of intransitive verb. A. F. Potts in *Wordsworth's Prelude: A Study of its Literary Form* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1953) offers us an examination of its literary sources, antecedents and shaping forces. She traces in fourteen chapters the growth of the poem and of the poet's mind in relation to the poems that Wordsworth studied in school and in college. *The Prelude* is very like many markedly different English poems. In its lyric and idyllic character it is like Beattie's *Ministrel*, Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, and Gray's *Bard*. When Wordsworth reshapes it into a nature ritual, it grows to be like Thomson's *Seasons*. When it reaches its apocalyptic episodes, it is akin to Young's *Night Thoughts*. Other works that may have shaped Wordsworth's poem are Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Mark Akenside's *Pleasures of Imagination*, Pope's *Dunciad Book IV*, and Goldsmith's *Traveller*. Her analysis is, however, more than an enthusiastic source hunting. She establishes that the poem is culturally generic and not an isolated phenomenon. As the history of Wordsworth's literary heritage it remains unrivalled. Potts's more recent study, *The Elegiac Mode: Poetic Form in Wordsworth and Other Elegists* (Cornell, 1967) is not a history of elegiac literature. She makes a review of elegies and

similar meditative poems familiar to Wordsworth when he wrote the Lucy and Matthew poems. She has sought to distinguish genuine elegy from the mortuary idyll and lyric melancholia of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Then she proceeds to demonstrate that the Greek and Latin connotation of elegy can be illustrated from Wordsworth's writing to justify the classical perspective on the development of his style. Her conclusion is that it is quite justifiable to speak of Wordsworth and Yeats as elegiac poets with the same assurance with which we speak of Sophocles and Shakespeare as dramatic poets, and of Homer and Milton as epic poets.

The preoccupation with Wordsworth's style and form has produced another interesting study, Herbert Lindenberger's book on *The Prelude* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1963) built on the approaches of F.R. Leavis, William Empson, W. K. Wimsatt, and R. D. Havens among others. The work is 'a series of related essays, each design to approach the poem from a single direction.' The first three chapters deal with the language and style of the poem and examines 'the landscape of re-enactment' to suggest simultaneously physical fact and spiritual reality. He says that rhetorical strategies are at the heart of those great moments of spiritual discovery achieved through this interaction. It is a pity that Lindenberger has not provided a more satisfactory model of analysis than his concentration on fragments allows.

Among the miscellaneous works on the poet may be mentioned W. J. B. Owen's *Wordsworth as Critic* (Univ. of Toronto Press, 1969), an examination of the prose writings of the poet. Collection of important critical essays is a modern phenomenon, and there are a few on Wordsworth. Among the best may be mentioned *The Major English Romantic Poets* (ed. by C. D. Thorpe, C. Baker, and B. Weaver, Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1957), *English Romantic Poets* (ed. by M. H. Abrams, Galaxy Books, 1960), *Discussions of Wordsworth* (ed. by J. Davis, Boston, 1965), and *Wordsworth's Mind and Art* (ed. by A. W. Thomson, Oliver & Boyd, 1969). Nearly all of them contain fine appraisals of Wordsworth's poetry and his significance for the modern era.

There are innumerable short essays on Wordsworth published in journals and only those that are of more than ephemeral interest are listed below: S. C. Wilcox's "Wordsworth's River Duddon Sonnets" (*PMLA*, 1954); C. R. Woodring's "On Liberty in the Poetry of Wordsworth" (*PMLA*, 1955); F. A. Pottle's "The Eye on the Object in the Poetry of Wordsworths" (*Wordsworth Centenary Studies*, ed. G. T. Dunklin, 1951); J. R. Baird's "Wordsworth's Inscrutable Workmanship and the Emblems of Reality" (*PMLA*, 1953); William Empson's "Sense in *The Prelude*"

(*KR*, 1951) ; Stephen Parrish, "Wordsworth and Coleridge on Metre" (*JEGP*, 1960) ; G. H. Hartman, "Wordsworth's *Descriptive Sketches* and the Growth of the Poet's Mind" (*PMLA*, 1961) ; E. Morgan, "A Prelude to *The Prelude*" (*EC*, 1955) ; E. E. Bostetter, "Wordsworth's Dim and Perilous Way" (*PMLA*, 1956) ; W. J. B. Owen, "The Major Theme of Wordsworth's 1800 Preface" (*EC*, 1956) ; C. I. Patterson, "Meaning and Significance in *Peele Castle*" (*JEGP*, 1957) ; J. E. Jordan, "Wordsworth's Humor" (*PMLA* 1958) ; K. Maclean, "Levels of Imagination in Wordsworth's *Prelude*" (*PQ*, 1959) ; B. Garlitz, "The Immortality Ode : Its Cultural Progeny" (*SEL*, 1967) ; R. L. Schneider, "The Failure of Solitude" (*JEGP*, 1955) ; J. A. Finch, "*The Ruined Cottage* Restored" (*JEGP*, 1967) ; E. M. Conran, "The Dialectic of Experience" (*PMLA*, 1960) ; C. J. Smith, "The Effect of Shakespeare's Influence on *The Borderers*" (*SP*, 1953) ; Robert Langbaum, "The Evolution of Soul in Wordsworth's Poetry" (*PMLA*, 1967) ; J. A. W. Heffernan, "Wordsworth on Imagination" (*PMLA*, 1966) ; and Stephen Gill, "Wordsworth's Breeches Pocket : Attitude to the Didactic Poet" (*EC*, 1969).

The present short sketch endeavours in summary form to indicate the main tendencies and to relate them to larger movements of mind in the period covered. In conclusion it may be said that taken as a whole Wordsworth's criticism in the period under review is the best alike in range and insight and stimulus. As an aid to the appreciation of Wordsworth, it has no equal.

THE POETRY OF CONTEMPLATION

SOME CONTINUITIES

KITTY SCOULAR DATTA

EVERY time of change tends to see previous times of change in its own image, so this may be why recent writing on the European Romantic movement has been laying particular stress on what we may call its apocalyptic element and its contemplative element. For in the contemporary life of western society these two strains are seeking new forms of expression in the general cult of the New : the apocalyptic strain presents images of a universe and a society completely re-made, with the stale and traditional abolished ; the contemplative strain presents a way of life which rises above what seem to be the purely materialistic concerns of modern society, pointing to the inward roots of human problems and revealing the richness of man's inner resources.

Wordsworth and Coleridge were in their own way concerned with the apocalyptic element in their confrontation with the French Revolution and its aftermath ; but they were also great contemplatives in a particularly modern style, and it is from this point of view that our discussion will regard them.

Essentially, the apocalyptic strain belongs to the life of contemplation rather than the life of action : it is a mode of vision which in prophesying the new life of the future also claims to uncover the base of present corruption, as the *Apocalypse* of St. John, the *Book of Revelation* does, setting the mythical pattern. Yet this strain has repeatedly led to action, as men strove in their own times to realise their vision of society made new. And repeatedly the failure to materialize the vision has been followed by a period of dashed hopes, self-criticism, even cynicism. Never before the late 18th. century had there been such widespread millenarian hopes ; and never before had there been such a rebound as the early 19th century experienced ; and some modern interpreters of the Romantic Movement read it mainly in socio-political terms. But certain spirits whom we call Romantic were apocalyptic thinkers in a wider sense. Blake is the most impressively thorough-going of them all in England ; for though he had plenty to say about the ills of European society, he considered that the cure lay in greater inwardness, rather than a preoccupation

with the material for its own sake, and that this inwardness would itself be the basis for juster relations at the material level. 'When Imagination, Art and Science and all Intellectual Gifts, all the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, are look'd upon as of no use and only Contention remains to Man, then the Last Judgement begins ..' But men are too insensitive to realise that they are living in a time of judgement ; so the artist becomes a prophet, through whom 'The Imaginative Image returns by the seeds of Contemplative Thought' ('A Vision of the Last Judgment', 1810). Contemplation embraces more than an apocalyptic interest, however ; it is as much concerned with the introspective pursuit of self-knowledge, and the intuitive understanding of the ground of Being. Yet when contemplative thought finds poetic expression, it is commonly in terms of what Blake called 'the Imaginative Image', that is to say, in visionary images of lost and recovered paradise. Blake himself made these images in mythical, supernatural form ; but Wordsworth's visions are sustained by nature in a unique way. His lost paradise is not described in a directly mythical manner, but rather in terms of nature's ministry to its consciousness.

Since we are so accustomed to think of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's work as a sheer break with the past, it may be instructive to consider how much their contemplative strain owes to tradition, if only to come to understand what is genuinely new about it.

The European Renaissance is often described as a great process of secularisation ; but it is important to understand clearly what this exactly means. One way of putting it is to say that the medieval idea of contemplation as the reserve of an elite at the top of society, dedicated to seek the knowledge of God and of their own souls, with the help of the Offices of the Church, was replaced by a higher rating of the rights and duties of the active layman, who was also encouraged to be something of a contemplative too. Thus some of the great works of intellect of the Renaissance were written by civil servants, with a very high and religious notion of their role in society. So if the Renaissance was in this special sense a secularising process it could also be described in terms of a wider idea of the religious life. This widening has two features which are particularly interesting for their effect on the arts—one is the syncretistic urge which seeks a harmony between different mythologies, classical and Biblical ; and the other, closely related to this, is the strong and widespread sense of cosmic analogy. If we are discussing epic poetry like *The Faerie Queene*, we will want to stress the syncretic play with mythologies ; if we are discussing Metaphysical poetry we will stress cosmic analogy ; and both interests are part of the contemplative life of

the Renaissance. Both 'went underground' during the late 17th and 18th centuries, and both were taken up for re-interpretation by the Romantics. The syncretistic urge bore fruit in the search for new mythologies and non-dogmatic interpretation of the old myths ; and the sense of living cosmic analogy is as powerfully realised as it has ever been. But again a further secularisation took place, this time more thoroughgoing than the relative secularisation of the Renaissance. We can symbolise it in this way : Donne and Herbert were priests, though married priests, and their contemplative poetry is full of traditional ecclesiastical symbolism ; Coleridge, and Wordsworth even more so, lived by their priesthood to poetry, and believed that a fidelity to their own deepest introspection and private experience would lead them to Truth.

Coleridge, Donne and Constemplative Tradition

In his prose writings Coleridge was much more explicit than Wordsworth about his theory of contemplation and its relation to tradition, and some of the images in which he realises his theory are strikingly powerful.

'The first range of hills, that encircles the scanty vale of human life, is the horizon for the majority of its inhabitants. On *its* ridges the common sun is born and departs. From *them* the stars rise, and touching *them* they vanish. By the many, even this range, the natural limit and bulwark of the vale, is but imperfectly known. Its higher ascents are too often hidden by mists and clouds from uncultivated swamps, which few have courage or curiosity to penetrate. To the multitude below these vapours appear, now as the dark haunts of terrific agents, on which none may intrude with impunity ; and now all aglow, with colours not their own, they are gazed at as the splendid palaces of happiness and power. But in all ages there have been a few, who measuring and sounding the rivers of the vale at the feet of their furthest inaccessible falls have learned, that the sources must be far higher and far inward ; a few, who even in the level stream have detected elements, which neither the vale itself nor the surrounding mountains contained or could supply.'

[*Biographia Literaria*, Chap. XII. pp. 118-19, Everyman edn.]

This mysterious range of hills—anyone who knows the English Lake District with its mists and falls will recognise how they took on their symbolic aspect from Coleridge's residence there in their presence—have become intimations of the life of philosophical introspection. 'The

sources must be far higher and far inward'. In these two simple adjectives Coleridge catches two characteristic traditional ways of imaging mystery, as transcendence and as inwardness, and we marvel at the ease with which he reconciles these opposites in the image of the stream at its source. This is the stream of self-consciousness which meditation had followed, according to the Socratic precept 'Know thyself', not indeed to the source, for this remains hidden, but to the point where the individual self discloses elements, which neither the vale itself nor the surrounding mountains contained or could supply'. What Romantic thought did was to make the religious quest an analogy for the poetic quest, sometimes even identical with it. For Coleridge poetry, like intuitive experience in general, is 'dependent upon more, and more fugitive causes' than everyday experience and the lower kind of scientific thinking.

Coleridge describes this special kind of consciousness very carefully, distinguishing it both 'from mere reflection and *re*-presentation on' on the one hand, and on the other from 'those flights of lawless speculation which, abandoned by *all* distinct consciousness' transcend 'the bounds and purposes of our intellectual faculties'. There is a kind of knowledge of ideas which is not the second-hand appropriation of facts or of other people's thought: 'deep thinking is attainable only by means of deep feeling, and all truth is a species of revelation' (Letter to Poole, March 23, 1801). This kind of knowledge may express itself in the philosophical concept; it also expresses itself naturally in the poetic symbol. As contemplative thought at its best has always done, Coleridge stressed the passivity essential for the rising of such concepts and symbols on the waters. It was Plotinus whom he quoted to place his ideas in tradition: "We ought not to pursue it ('the highest and intuitive knowledge') with a view of detecting its secret source, but to watch in quiet till it suddenly shines upon us; preparing ourselves for the blessed spectacle as the eye waits patiently for the rising sun". (*Biographia Literaria*, Chap. XII, *ed. cit.*, p. 120).

Coleridge was interested not only in the condition of genuine intuitive knowledge, but also in the condition in which people communicate genuinely with one another. This condition is '*freedom*', the medium 'which they possess in common, as the common ethereal element of their being, the tremulous reciprocations of which propagate themselves even to the inmost of the soul. Where the spirit of man is not *filled* with the consciousness of freedom (were it only from its restlessness, as of one still struggling in bondage) all spiritual intercourse is interrupted, not only with others, but even with himself. No wonder, then, that he remains incomprehensible to himself as well as to others', (*B.L.*, Chap. XII, p. 121).

Coleridge recognised with clarity the state of what we have come to call alienation, 'the fearful desert of consciousness' in which 'he wearies himself out with empty words, to which no friendly echo answers, either from his own heart, or the heart of a fellow being' ; (*Ibid.*) The reason he gives for this state is loss of freedom. But what is this freedom ? It is detachment from dependence upon 'mere words from without' ; 'notional phantoms, the mere refractions from unseen and distant truths through the distorting medium of his own unenlivened and stagnant understanding'.

This concern with intuitive knowledge, with inner freedom, with the grounds of mutual communication, was not new. Though it was his reading of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, such as Kant, which established Coleridge's attitude, he was in fact placing himself in the main-stream of western contemplative thinking. St. Augustine's *Confessions*, with their strong introspective bent and their special fusion of the New Testament with the Platonism and Plotinus, had established these interests thirteen centuries earlier. He also had sketched out the way two people share each other's truth. 'I verily see it not in thee, nor thou in me : but both of us in the self-same unchangeable truth, which is above our minds' (*Confessions*, XII. 25). He had described the condition of mind in which a man discovers that the divine image is appearing in his own consciousness like a recreation of something lost. Though Augustine did not use the word 'freedom', he was in his own way describing the freedom so basic to Coleridge's own view of the highest knowledge. And Augustine had also written of the souls watered 'by a secret and sweet spring', far from the turbulent ocean below, 'that the Earth may bring forth fruit, works of mercy' (XIII. 17).

How had these contemplative ideas and images fared in English poetry before Coleridge and Wordsworth ? Metaphysical poetry offers us some significant instances. Donne's 'Satyre On Religion' measures and sounds the rivers of the vale, the different dogmatic versions of religion and anti-religion in his time, and decides with Coleridge that 'the sources must be far higher and far inward'.

As streames are, Power is : those blest flowers that dwell
At the rough streames calme head, thrive and do well,
But having left their roots, and themselves given
To the streames tyrannous rage, alas, are driven
Through mills, and rockes, and woods, and at last, almost
Consum'd in going, in the sea are lost ;
So perish Soules, which more chuse mens unjust
Power from God claym'd, than God himselfe to trust.

This passage, however, throws up the difference between Coleridge's interests and Donne's as clearly as the resemblance. Donne was mainly concerned, much as Augustine had been, with the limits of power in society (in the 1590's, when the poem was written, religious and political power were far from being strictly separated in Europe) and with the absolutist claims of different systems to be the truth. Coleridge, on the other hand, was concerned with a much subtler form of tyranny, the lazy content of the mind with halftruths and borrowed notions which have never been made part of one's essential inner being. Yet both image their concerns in the stream at its calm source and in the valley far from the source. Donne's valley is a rough area of destruction ; Coleridge's is at worst 'a fearful desert of consciousness'. Donne subtly suggests the interpenetration of man's social and inner life, whereas Coleridge's attention is concentrated particularly on his inner awareness. This shift in emphasis is characteristic of Romantic writing. Another shift is from the Renaissance stress upon activity to the Romantic stress upon the passive. So Donne writes

On a huge hill,
Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and hee that will
Reach her, about must, and about must goe ;
And what the hills suddenness resists, winne so.

Coleridge's image of ascent is the 'small water-insect in the surface of rivulets, which throws a cinque-spotted shadow fringed with prismatic colours on the sunny bottom of the brook'. He has noticed 'how the little animal wins its way up against the stream, by alternate pulses of active and passive motion, now resisting the current, and now yielding to it in order to gather strength and a momentary *fulcrum* for a further propulsion. This is no unapt emblem of the mind's self-experience in the art of thinking.' (*B. L.*, Chap. VII, p. 60). Coleridge is closer to psychological fact than Donne, whose purpose was not one of descriptive analysis of the higher reaches of man's mind, but moral persuasion of his readers not to give up the ardours of thought. 'Yet strive so, that before age, death's twilight, Thy Soule rest...' However, when we come to think of it, Coleridge's image of the tiny insect moving upwards against the flow of the stream contains its own remarkable rigours.

Images from organic life rose characteristically in Coleridge's mind when he came to write of the imaginative process. When he paid tribute to certain western mystics for preventing his mind from 'being imprisoned within the outline of any single dogmatic system', he described the presentiment they had given him 'that all the products of the mere reflective

faculty partook of death, and were as the rattling twigs and sprays in winter, into which a sap was yet to be propelled from some root to which I had not penetrated, if they were to afford my soul either food or shelter.' (*B.L.*, Chap. IX, 70). Donne had written

As the trees sap doth seeke the root below
In winter, in my winter now I goe,
Where none but thee, th'Eternall root
Of true Love I may know.

('A Hymne to Christ, at the Authors last going into Germany') Donne's orientation is distinctly religious : the root is the divine source of love obscured under worldly concerns, which comes into play especially in periods of outward deprivation. I think that here Donne was probably directly remembering Augustine, who constantly returned in his writings to the image of the root of love. For him winter symbolised man's temporal life as a whole, not any particular harsh experience. 'For you are dead, says the Apostle, just as trees during the winter ; they appear as if withered and dead. Well, then, what if we are dead ? The root is deep within : where our root is, there is our life also, for there is our charity' *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, XXXVI. 1-2). In Coleridge the image is wonderfully realised again in terms of the psychology of knowing : the root, like the stream's source, is the hiding-place of man's power.* It is perhaps fashionable to think of Coleridge's organic imagery as something peculiarly Romantic, a reaction from the mechanistic analogies which held the centre of European attention after Descartes; but the ancient religious language was unselfconsciously full of symbols from organic processes. After the mechanistic hayday of the eighteenth century, however, writers understood exactly why the organic analogy was important, in a way earlier writers could not have done.

Wordsworth, Vaughan and the Landscape of the Mind.

When we talk about cosmic analogy in Renaissance poetry, I suppose most readers will think of the great world of nature mirroring in numberless

* This image appears in Schiller's *Wallenstein*, which Coleridge translated, 1799, Act II

Thou hast gained thy point, Octavio ! Once more am I
Almost as friendless as at Regensburg.
There I had nothing left me but myself—
But what one man can do, you have now experience.
The twigs have you hewed off, and here I stand
A leafless trunk. But in the sap within
Love's the creating power, and a new world
May sprout forth from it... (1-10).

emblems the little world of man, the kind of analogy which provides for moral discriminations and psychological niceties, since the great world is stuffed with a super-abundance of creatures whose differences bring out some variation in the life of man at the centre. Wordsworth described such analogy-making in *The Prelude* (1805), 282-3, 285-88 ; as 'Nature's secondary grace, That outward illustration which is hers', 'The charm more superficial and yet sweet Which from her works finds way, contemplated As they hold forth a genuine counterpart And softening mirror of the moral world.' But the world of nature might also momentarily mirror, not the world of man as it is, but a world of lost perfection, or its changes a world of apocalyptic destruction and splendour ; and these images are just as much a part of cosmic analogy of the Renaissance period.

If Henry Vaughan is ever mentioned in the same breath as Wordsworth, it is because Vaughan wrote his own 'intimations of immortality' in 'The Retreate ; but they have certain inner affinities which go beyond any particular poem, and which cannot be reduced to the direct acquaintance of Wordsworth with Vaughan's poetry. What we can do, by laying them side by side, is rather to suggest some ways in which Wordsworth developed the earlier contemplative tradition in poetry.

Several of Vaughan's best poems are apocalyptic in the sense of the New Testament, intuitions of the divine advent which will complete human history and restore perfection ; and what is striking about these poems is that it is some change in sky and time, wind and weather which brings such intimations. Professor Louis Martz, in his recent book *The Paradise Within*, has pointed to the Augustinian flavour of Vaughan's kind of contemplation, in its free association not tied to strictly rigid dogmatic formulations, and in its penchant for recollection in tranquillity of intuitions lost to direct experience but alive in the memory. Other poems of Vaughan do, however, live in "a present joy" (the phrase is Wordsworth's, *The Prelude* I. 56), and his Language shows a remarkable interpenetration of mind and landscape. Take the poem entitled 'Mount of Olives' :

When first I saw true beauty, and thy Joys
Active as light, and calm without all noise
Shin'd on my soul, I felt through all my pow'rs
Such a rich air of sweets, as Evening show'rs
Fan'd by a gentle gale Convey and breath
On some parch'd bank, crown'd with a flowrie wreath ;
Odors, and Myrrh, and balm in one rich floud
O'r-ran my heart, and spirited my bloud,
My thoughts did swim in Comforts, and mine eie
Confest, *The world did only paint and lie.*

This poem bodies forth the quality of a spiritual state: his sense of the divine presence and the influence of grace on a soul which previously did no safe course steer But wander'd under tempests all the year, Went bleak and bare in body as in mind, And was blow'n through by ev'ry storm and wind.' In contrast,

I am so warm'd now by this glance on me,
That, 'midst all storms I feel a Ray of thee.

it is like 'a lively sense of spring' brought in the beauty of a winter landscape 'To my Cold thoughts'. He is himself a withered plant beginning 'to look green and flourish'; and the poem ends, as it began, with 'Joy'. The reader who turns his mind from this short poem to the first book of *The Prelude* must be struck by the correspondence in sensibilities. In both poets, the 'now' of present joy points back to 'when first' and forwards to anticipations of future song, in both, joyful participation in organic life passes over, almost imperceptibly, into spiritual joy. In Vaughan the transition is lightly indicated by *as* and *so*; in Wordsworth it is made from 'on my body' to 'felt within A corresponding mild creative breeze', what he calls 'nature's ministry'. For both, this inspiration is 'active as light'—'a power that does not come unrecogniz'd, a storm, Which, breaking up a long-continued frost Brings with it vernal promises', as Wordsworth puts it. Vaughan's awareness of 'true Beauty', as is characteristic of the older Platonism, moves through sight to invade the other senses, as all his powers come fully awake: being shone upon, he himself begins to 'shine' and 'sing'. Though Wordsworth could also describe inspiration in terms of 'hurtless light Opening the peaceful clouds' (353-4), wind is more characteristic of his experience; and while this may be a 'gentle breeze' it may also have the more disturbing presence of a tempest. Both poets knew that the mysterious growth of the inner life depended upon 'severe interventions' (355) as well as 'fearless visitings' (352); and before Wordsworth made Nature the direct minister of his moral education, Vaughan verged close upon the same identification of the inner and outer tempest. He does not need the help of books, Vaughan says in 'Joy', 'who can have A lesson plaid him by a winde or wave.'

Thou hast
Another mirth, a mirth though overcast
With clouds and rain, yet full as calm and fine
As those clear *heights* which above tempests shine.

Or, as Wordsworth finely expressed it through another metaphor in *The Prelude*, Book 1.

The mind itself

*The meditative mind, best pleased, perhaps,
While she, as duteous as the Mother Dove,
Sits brooding, lives not always to that end,
But hath less quiet instincts, goadings on*

That drive her as in trouble through the groves. (1805. 149-54).

Just as in the present Wordsworth was aware that poetry was born from periods of distress, so he was amazed, in recollecting 'all the terrors, all the early miseries, Regrets, vexations, lassitudes', that they 'should ever have made up The calm existence that is mine when I Am worthy of myself.' Yet he half-apologizes for beginning with such early recollections of 'days Disown'd by memory', which were to be mature life like 'snowdrops among winter snows' 'ere the birth of spring' (1805. 643-4). On the one hand he stresses slow unconscious growth, like the life of the seed underground; on the other he suggests that the 'bond of union betwixt life and joy' (585) is related to early intuitions of the mind's transcendence of nature. So he remembers when he was ten years old, 'I held unconscious intercourse With the eternal Beauty, drinking in A pure organic pleasure... (589-91). Vaughan was more sure of conscious absolute beginnings, but they are both aware of the way the mind grows beyond nature.

It is interesting to see through what poetic procedure the two poets subordinate nature to the mind's experience of itself. Both work through memory and its play with the categories of time, both recover past experience and in so doing interpret it, transcending it through contemplating it, so that 'now' becomes 'then' and vice-versa. But for Vaughan, as befits a lyric poet, the vehicle of subordination is the simile.

So have I known some beauteous *Paisage* rise

In suddain flowres and arbours to my Eies,

And in the depth and dead of winter bring

To my cold thoughts a lively sense of sprin. (17-20).

Wordsworth, as befits his slow-moving 'meditative history', has more complex relations with his recollections. His memory is not simply a storehouse of images (the typical Renaissance way of regarding it) but is veritably haunted by images, which can come alive again like daemonic presences, 'unknown modes of being'. The conscious mind bows humbly before the presences of nature, which are themselves sometimes clearly symbols of reaches of mind 'far higher and far inward', and sometimes stand in their own selfhood over against him. What we can say of both is that landscape is never simply the mirror of a mood, but of some spiritual essence.

In their play upon present, past and future they made their poetry into

prophecy, which recovers the past for the present, or carries the best of the present into the future. The first 54 lines of *The Prelude*, in the present tense, recover a strain of joyful hope and release from its aftermath of despondency to prompt the poet to further hope. The characteristic prayer which ends a Vaughan poem is also a bridge from 'now' towards things to come.

The Continuities which this sort of study has discovered are certain powerful images for the workings of the mind—the stream and its source, the mountain, the insect moving on the face of the stream, the seed or root growing secretly underground in winter but sending out green shoots as a presage of things to come. These are organic images, belonging to nature's processes, which long ago became images of the mind's transcendence over nature in self-knowledge. Their history in poetry, as we have rather briefly suggested, is part of the history of European consciousness ; and Coleridge and Wordsworth, standing at the beginning of the modern era, made them most characteristically their own.

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON WORDSWORTH

S. C. SEN

I

THE title for this short essay is chosen to avoid raising expectation about what the writer has to say. At this late day little can be said on Wordsworth that has not already been said by others but the remarks that will be made will not be offered as a disconnected series. A preliminary observation regarding some important aspects of Wordsworth's poetry will be followed by a more detailed study of his landscape with reference to his theory of poetry, on which T.S. Eliot offered certain comments, testifying more to youthful arrogance than to critical discrimination.

The short poem 'My heart leaps up when I behold/ A rainbow in the sky' has a central significance to his work as a statement of poetic faith. Palgrave in the *Golden Treasury* has placed it immediately before the Immortality Ode with admirable tact. After the two lines already quoted, the poet goes on : "So was it when my life began,/So is it now I am a man,/So be it when I shall grow old". The poem was written in 1802. The Immortality Ode followed some two or three years later. Meanwhile he discovered the untenability of his faith. The hand of time has overthrown his expectation about the future :

The glory and the freshness of a dream.

It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—

Turn wheresoe'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The journey since *The Rainbow* has been weary one but not without significant gains. It was not simple disenchantment, a fading away of things he loved but also an emergence of new values and a self-discovery :

To me the meanest flower that blows can give

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

While he had rejoiced at aspects of Nature and was capable of a simple response to their appeal, he now turned more inward and the sense of an access to the Great Design floats now in the atmosphere manifesting itself as the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge, which he had described as the soul of Poetry. It is interesting to note that Tagore's

poem "Hriday amar nachere ajike, etc." is written under the influence of *The Rainbow*.

Wordsworth is often called a mystic. The following passage from "Tintern Abbey" is an illustration of this metaphysical element in his experience :

That serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul.

Thomas G. Bergin in his work on Dante. (1) observes "the enraptured sleep is not unknown to mystics". Dante is not a mystic in the strict sense, he tells us and observes continuing the argument : "Dante is only rarely in that state of mind called apathy ; he is not the passive object of the total and free action of God except in the vision of the Empyrean". Wordsworth has experienced the "enraptured sleep" but he too is only rarely in the state of mind called apathy. Much of this mystical experience is found in the two famous Odes and very little outside them.

II

I read the whole of Wordsworth's poetry to collect some facts about his landscape. My aim was to study the objective basis of his reflexions on Nature. An objective approach such as this is likely to provoke the criticism that it is inept and prosaic. Although there is some truth in the view yet measurements and calculations can throw light on the artist's attitude and technique, which we can hardly dispense with. One is for example surprised to notice the omissions in the Wordsworth-world of flora and fauna. And if we ask, what are they due to, we may possibly come to some interesting conclusions.

I am giving below a list of plants and animals mentioned in his poetry :

(A) *Plants.*

Amaranth. Apple. Ash. Aspin. Acorn. Acacia. Aspen. Alder. Briar. Birch. Beech. Broom. Butterfly. Bramble. Currant. Chestnut. Cedar. Cuckoo flower. Carnation. Celandine. Cypress. Crocus. Cyclades. Cowslip. Cherry tree. Citron. Daffodil. Dandelion. Daisy. Eglantine. Elm. Elder. Fern. Furz. Fir. Forget-me-not. Foxglove. Gowan. Grape. Gooseberry. Gorse. Herbs. Holly. Hazel. Heart-ease. Hawthorn. Harebell. Hyacinth. Heath. Hyssop. Hart's

Horn. Ivy. Jasmine. Juniper. King Cup. Love Lies. Bleeding. Lily. Laurel. Lotus. Larch. Lichen. Lime tree. Myrtle. Marigold. Maple. Moss. Maize. Mulberry. Manna. Nightshade. Oak. Olive. Orange. Poplar. Pear. Pansy. Prim Rose. Plane tree. Poppy. Palm. Pine. Ragwort. Rose. Rushes. Strawberry. Sycamore. Speedwell. Star of Bethlehem. Snowdrop. Spear grass. Thistle. Thorn. Thyme. Thyrsus. Turnip. Vine. Violet. Yew. Woodbine. Walnut. Willow. Weed. Water lily. Whortle berries.

(B) *Birds and Animals*

Ass. Antler. Bear. Buck. Bittern. Bee. Bustard. Butterfly. Blackbird. Bird of Paradise. Bird of Heaven. Beetle. Buzzard. Crocodile. Cuckoo. Cicada. Cricket. Caterpillar. Cow. Colt. Crow. Cat. Chamois. Cockatoo. Cormorant. Cock. Dog. Dor-hawk. Dromedary. Deer. Duck. Doe. Dopingay. Eagle. Falcon. Fly. Fawn. Frog. Glow worm. Goat. Grey Hound. Horse. Heron. Hare. Hedgehog. Hound. Heart. Hind. Hawk. Heifer. Hornet. Hen. Insect. Jay. Kite. Kid. Kitten. Leveret. Lamb. Locust. Lion. Linnet. Leopard. Lynx. Lintwhite. Lizard. Lark. Moth. Mole. Magpie. Mastiff. Monkey. Mule. Muccawiss. Mare. Nautilus. Nightingale. Newt. Otter. Osprey. Ostrich. Owl. Ox. Poppinjay. Pelican. Pony. Plover. Parrot. Palfrey. Philomel. Redbreast. Raven. Rabbit. Robin Goodfellow. Reptile. Rook. Roe. Rat. Swan. Swallow. Sourd. Snail. Sheep. Steed. Skylark. Steer. Stag. Spider. Slow-worm. Squirrel. Tabby. Toad. Thrush. Tiger. Turtle Dove. Tortoise. Throstle. Wren. Wolf. Worm. Wood Cock.

(C) *Fish*

Fish. Leaping Fish. Minnow. Herring. Pike. Whale.

Comments : It is hardly to be expected that Wordsworth will write about birds, animals, etc. like a botanist, zoologist or ornithologist. Nor can he be as interested in fish as a pisciculturist. Yet even from the common man's point of view there are large gaps in his study. A few of his omissions will be mentioned. In his world there are no ants, termites, fleas, cockroaches, bugs, mosquitoes and weasels. We do not notice snipes, canaries, storks, tern, among his birds. Walrus, Beaver, Camel, Bison, Salamander, Sloth, Baboon are not honoured by a single reference. Similarly, the landscape of trees is also inadequate. We do not come across lilacs, wistarias, or bamboos, anemones, begonias, camomiles, etc. in his poetry.

Alexander von Humboldt, who was only a year older than Wordsworth made the most detailed study of plant and animal life and travelled

widely all over the world for the purpose His most fruitful contribution was his pictorial views of South American flora and fauna, which brought about a revolution in the contemporary conception of landscape in western art. He laid great store on the "Totaleindruck einer Gegend—Einheit in der Vielheit." (The total impression of a region, the unity in multiplicity).² His study led from Nature as Landscape to Nature as Cosmos (p. 141).

Unlike Humboldt Wordsworth did not pay attention to individual features of Nature. Frequently he wrote about a bird or tree without trying to identify it. His purpose was quite different from Humboldt's. They seem to start at different ends. Humboldt arrived at his conception of unity from the study of individual plant and animal. Wordsworth on the other hand had an intuition of this unity and saw its confirmation in the world of Nature.

Will it be just to conclude that Wordsworth did not know his Nature well enough to give us a true conception of it and strayed into metaphysics from ignorance of the true facts? His victories will then seem undeserved. But there is another mode of dealing with the question, which assures justice to the Poet. This is to examine his definition of poetry and to see if it offers any explanation of the attitude of inadequacy to Nature, to which attention has been drawn. He wrote: "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity".

A great part of what he wrote answers to this description or definition. He wrote what he remembered of Nature and of his own emotions. His practice was different from Shakespeare's. The great dramatist imaginatively exploited the resources of the language and was not confined by the boundaries of memory; "With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries" (MN. Dream. III. I. 170). "Virtue! a fig (*Othello*. 1. III. 322.)

T. S. Eliot did not think Wordsworth's definition valid. "Consequently, we must believe," he wrote "that 'emotion recollected in tranquillity' is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor without distortion of meaning, tranquillity. It is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all." (*Tradition and Individual Talent*.)

Eliot's attitude reminds us of a teacher lecturing a class of fourth form children. He is instructing them how to think *rightly* about poetry. He himself saw the dogmatism of his attitude here and elsewhere and so we find him saying in the essay "The Music of Poetry": "I can never re-read any of my prose writings without acute embarrassment." His

own dogmatism has given way to a more reasoned view, which may be quoted : "The poet, at the back of his mind, if not as his ostensible purpose, is always trying to defend the kind of poetry he is writing, or to formulate the kind that he wants to write." (*On Poetry And Poets*. Faber. p. 26)

In the light of what Eliot says at a later date one can see that Wordsworth's offence because of a difference in outlook from him is now fully and generously condoned. Wordsworth was entirely faithful to his doctrine and in my later references to his lyrics this point will be more elaborately dealt with. In *The Prelude* (Book First, lines 45-46) Wordsworth writing about a present experience without an intervening period for his memory to work upon it called the attention of his readers to the fact :

Thus far, O Friend ! did I, not used to make
A present joy the matter of a song.

Wordsworth knew the job he was doing and his poetical criticism always revealed an insight and sensitiveness, which often proved superior to the learning and subtlety of his great collaborator in the production of the *Lyrical Ballads*. I shall now make a little digression so as to give point to the title chosen for this essay.

Vagaries of Critical Doctrines

T. S. Eliot quotes certain passages out of Othello and Timon as illustration of what he called self-dramatization. The phrase like others of his coinage, hardly makes any sense yet many seem to go into raptures over such word-making skill of which Eliot was a master. Timon and Othello are not creatures of this world, they are not creatures of flesh and blood and are only dramatic creations. There is therefore no scope for self-dramatization on their part. For the poet has dramatized all their acts and emotions. I also object to Coleridge's famous definition : "The secondary Imagination...dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to create." My explanation for this is that a true definition must be rendered in a non-metaphorical language. For when the metaphors are withdrawn, we hardly understand the purport of the statement.

III

The movement of his lyrics towards a summit is the movement of recollection arriving at a passionate, visionary or universal view or some form of comprehensive conception by an ascent from remembering to

reflexion. With no other great poet as with Wordsworth do we find the concluding lines so startlingly revelatory. If the body of a poem bears evidence of memory, the elevation at the end that of the tranquillity of spirit, which gathers together the fragments for a statement, which can sometimes be enjoyed and understood even apart from the context.

I shall examine a few poems to ascertain how far my view can be sustained. The poet's homage to his wife ("She was a phantom of delight") may provide a good starting-point for the purpose. The first two stanzas out of the three are concerned with recollection, the last with a reconstruction of the whole personality :

And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel-light.

Although the word 'reflexion' has been used, the transition more frequently is to a visionary power whose emergence is incalculable but in Wordsworth it seemed to have an intimate relation to the functioning of recollection. Some of the Lucy poems may be briefly considered from the same point of view. Lucy has been generally thought to be a figment of the poet's imagination but the poem "Among All Lovely Things My Love Had Been", which does not seem to have been anthologised, gives a different impression. Here the poet tells us that Lucy had never seen a glow-worm and so while riding near her home in a stormy night, he caught one and laid it on a leaf and placed the leaf under a tree.

The whole next day, I hoped, and hoped with fear ;
At night the Glow-worm shone beneath the Tree :
I led my Lucy to the spot, "Look here !"
Oh ! joy it was for her, and joy for me !

A foot-note adds. "The incident described in this poem took place in 1795—probably at Racedown—between the poet and his sister Dorothy.—Ed." (*The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*. O.U.P. 1923. p. 623). It is, however, obvious that Dorothy cannot be identified with Lucy.

The resounding end of the poem "A sleep did my spirit seal" also records the cosmic ascent. "The Education of Nature" has the two lines as conclusion :

The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

which seem to rise to a universal lament. The summit of passion or vision thus frequently emerges in the concluding lines of the lyrics. Some more examples follow and as they are well known, no references seem called for :

"Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know !"
"Neither present time, nor years unborn

Could to my sight that heavenly face restore”.

“Alas ! The gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.”

It is useless to cite more examples. For mere number will not illuminate the subject until the view is somehow or other enlarged by our awareness of a new element not noticed before. Perhaps one may conclude on the basis of the poet's tendency to reserve the best bit for the end that he has an invincible orthodoxy in his nature and that he follows the custom of the dining table in serving the choicest morsel of his poetry to his reader. Or perhaps the end of a poem naturally provides the climactic moment, which rightly brings into action his best imaginative powers. All these explanations have their value but the most significant is the view which establishes a connexion between this practice and his utterance on the nature of poetry, which has already been quoted.

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WORDSWORTH IN LIGHTER VEINS

K. LAHIRI

DID Wordsworth ever laugh? There is no evidence in his poetry of a hearty laugh of the man. We doubt if William Wordsworth at all laughed aloud, even audibly. The stolid serenity of his visage was hardly disturbed by any spurt of animal vivacity. The image of the poet formed in his reader's mind is that of a middle-aged, bald-headed sober philosopher always ready to moralise, to read a message in Nature. Serious constitutionally, he can hardly be caught in a light vein.

The traditionally accepted image of a serious Wordsworth has been unconsciously 'conditioned by the equine solemnity of the portraits' in which it has been the fancy of painters to depict the poet in his old age. 'Grave, saturnine'—these are the epithets Hazlitt uses to characterise the poet's physical features, but then he adds a relieving touch to his sketch: Wordsworth's figure has 'a slight indication of sly humour, a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth'.

In Wordsworth's poetry the nearest approach to an indulgence in humour is a soft, faint smile which for a moment flickers on his lips and at the next is lost in his habitual gravity and coldness of countenance. The humour is scarcely perceptible, far from provoking an uproarious, boisterous, side-splitting laughter'.

Humour is not normally compatible with the romantic temper. Romantic poets generally are in a solemn, transcendental mood. Wordsworth, the leader, is more so. They are constantly thrown into an idealized, sublime vision. Only Byron, with his supreme disgust for restrictions—social, political and religious—on the absolute liberty of the individual, indulges in fits of satire from which humour is not far off.

Wordsworth, when he is not preoccupied with artless narrative, easily lapses into a contemplative mood, in which he seeks a peaceful communion with the tranquil spirit of Nature, or expresses his natural sympathy for humanity in life's little ironies and tragedies too deep for tears. Genuine humour seems to be foreign to the constitution of the poet in Wordsworth. Even when he is placed in a happy stance or light situation, from which humour is just the mood normally expected to issue, Wordsworth's reflective tendency plays the trick, pushing his poetry into the blind alley of his wonted didacticism, or his innate humanism flies tangent, escaping

into the safe resort of a healthy naturalism. Neither of these moods is congenial to the cultivation of the spirit of humour.

Yet Wordsworth's poetic temper is not totally unconscious of or averse to the comic aspects of life, as we are apt to misconceive him and his poetry. His nature, perpetually gravitating towards heavy seriousness, may be occasionally detected floating lightly for a moment in the outskirts of buoyancy. He is not constitutionally frigid and incapable of humour ; but he is quite sensitive to comic situations and susceptible to indulgence in a light mood, provided it does not cross the bounds of natural piety or disturb his normal tranquillity and poise of spirit by lapsing into the ridiculous that tends to land into satire. In Wordsworth's poetry passages are not altogether rare where humour 'crops out in gambolling playfulness and quirkish wit'. A breadth of drollery is particularly in the man's vein.

Humour spots in Wordsworth's poetry are few and far between. And only a long and thorough search can trace these for what they are worth. From a volume of seven hundred double-column pages of Wordsworth's complete poetical works not more than forty passages, covering about a dozen pages, can be compiled to illustrate his humour, and of these too some are of dubious merit as genuine specimens of humour. John E. Jordan labours hard to prove that Wordsworth had humour in him by harvesting four columns of jokey remarks from some fifty years of the poet's correspondence.

Comic situations and humorous passages are not scattered galore in Wordsworth's poetry. One has to make efforts in digging into relatively obscure, less familiar, regions of his verse to salvage and extract precious bits of innocently enjoyable humour out of the long-stretching granite strata of solemn moralisings and contemplations. Wordsworth's humour is found in poems comparatively unknown. 'In his best known poems, which are lyrics, the humorous element is not strong'. Yet we come across 'comic exaggeration' in *Expostulation and Reply* and *The Tables Turned*, and a sort of ironic humour in *Anecdote for Fathers*. Even in *Prelude* Wordsworth 'looks back at his youthful sports with a wistful amusement' and laughs gently at his childhood games—tit-tat-toe and the 'thick-ribbed army' of heavy, cheap playing cards :

"Some plebian cards
Which Fate, beyond the promise of their birth,
Had dignified, and called to represent
The persons of departed potentates."

(*Prelude*, I, 522-525)

Also most of Wordsworth's humorous poems come early in his poetic career. As he advances in years there is 'advance into solemnity.' It comes,

'not from a hardening of his risibilities, but from a new sense of his dedication to duty and a solemn sense of the function of poetry. In 1842 he wrote, "Power hath been given to please for higher ends than pleasure only."

Yet in Wordsworth's poetry, and in the life of the man, there is much more humour than has so far been recognised. A few passages no doubt diffuse a spontaneous spirit of humour, while many others appear to be laboured and strained, and, approaching very near genial humour, they recede farthest from it. Wordsworth achieves no more than 'laboured jocosity' when he tries to be funny. The poet himself makes

"No pretense
To wit that deals in double sense."
(*The Waggoner* II, 194)

In Wordsworth's humour there is no subtle play of wit traced by a sharp intellectual steel pen. He attempts a perception of humour, through the heart alone, through feeling and sympathy. Often a gentle, serene smile results from watching detachedly and enjoying innocently playful pranks of childhood, pitiful dotage of senility, or stupid antics of imbecility. There is not the slightest tinge of banter, bitterness or malicious glee at another's discomfiture; it is a pure philosophic smile.

Sensitiveness to incongruities in human nature and conduct, from which the sense of humour ultimately flows, is singularly lacking in Wordsworth's poetry. We do smile, even occasionally laugh, but we do so for reasons other than the right ones. How often we feel inclined to laugh at the poet's incapacity to see that his own writings lapse into the silly or ludicrous quite unintentionally ! 'Incidents, situations, meant to be pathetic, are really so homely as to provoke a smile.' Twisting of simplicity, seeing the humble in a wry light—is a much-used device with Wordsworth for producing a comic effect.

Hence in Wordsworth's poetry light touches bordering on the humorous occur when the poet deals with unfamiliar characters like vagabonds, wanderers, tourists, idiots, or figures extreme in some aspect, such as little children or old people.

Wordsworth exploits cheaply the principle of exaggeration, in characterization or in style and versification. Thus occasionally he secures effect by 'appealing to the reader's sense of superiority through verbal hyperbole or extremes of characterization. When he wished to be funny he tended to sink his style into near doggerel or soar into an incongruous elevation of figure, allusion and diction. Most of his comic characters are grotesquely simple or subnormal'.

Common, ordinary folk and normal adults in his poetry have simple

natural affections in their intercourse with their kind, or are absorbed in a solemn, religious mood, or are overwhelmed with a deep pathos which does not admit of a lighter vein. They scarcely betray eccentricities or incongruities provoking either laughter or a grin.

If Wordsworth's simple folk do not show eccentricities, provoking laughter, his humour itself is conditioned by the common liability of the romantics, viz. his own eccentricities, which are sometimes 'too personal to be understood or appreciated in the social frame of comedy' (J. R. Caldwell: 'The Solemn Romantics', *Studies in the Comic*, VIII, ii, 261). The result is that humour tends to be 'heavy-handed, awkward, banal, tasteless'.

Wordsworth can ill-manage a perfect synthesis of the comic and the serious. His Harry Gill is a success that way, because Harry is by nature 'an incorrigibly ludicrous figure. But with *The Idiot Boy* and *Peter Bell* Wordsworth plays close to the distressing side of pathos. Our preconceptions are too strongly against laughing at distraught mothers and beaten asses. We are too sentimental to enjoy such humour. Pathos can blend into comedy when it is handled tenderly. Wordsworth comes close to this in *Alice Fell*. But he does not often achieve this blend. His humour has a rollicking boisterousness about it. He puts pathos and comedy crudely side by side'. No artistic fusion happens: the scale remains leaning towards the side of the pathetic.

This imbalance results from Wordsworth's innate 'didactic desire to drive home a clear point'. The characteristic type of drollery that Wordsworth often produces needs a disinterested treatment of which he is incapable. He always 'wants to make his comic characters teachers of some moral or psychological truth. His desire to instruct makes him heavy-handed, when he intends to be interesting. Telling a good story is never enough for Wordsworth: he would grind some other axe about morality or psychology.' The sense of the comic, despite its complex nature, has a delicate purity that cannot stand interference. Didacticism breaks the gossamer spell.

The largest number of passages in Wordsworth's poetry tinged with humour appears to be the portraits of children, childhood being a new theme introduced, rather revived, by the Romantics. He not only deifies the child in a solemn tone, but also occasionally takes pleasure in humorously sketching the figure of the child in its native innocence, its naive reactions to simple objects and creatures of Nature, or in its unsophisticated relation to adults.

When Wordsworth writes a little poem, *To H. C., Six Years Old*, Hartley, Coleridge's son, we expect him to be in a joking mood at the

incessant prattling of the child. The poet, we feel, is visibly delighted at the child's continuous babbling, unending, fanciful curiosities, and lively carollings. But instead of teasing, tickling and humouring the child for amusement, as any normal adult would be inclined to do, the poet's evil genius, gravity, sees a transcendental vision behind all childish prattle and pranks ;

"Oh thou ! Whose fancies from afar are brought ;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol ;
Thou faery voyager !"

In contrast to this lost opportunity for humour, the comic situation born of the affected seriousness assumed by a girl of three is fully enjoyed by the poet in *Characteristics of a Child Three Years Old* :

"And Innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes ;
And feats of cunning ; and the pretty round
Of tresspasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched."

The poet is apparently amused at her mock-chastisement, her light sallies, and her bossing over her partner in play.

Another specimen of Wordsworth's attempt at humour out of childish playfulness is *The Rural Architecture*, a poem on three little boys,

"The highest not more
Than the height of a counsellor's bag."

They climb to the top of Great How and indulge in the childish prank of building a man of stones :

"They built him and christened him all in one day,
An urchin both vigorous and hale ;
And so without scruple they called him Ralph Jones."

This is sheer exuberant joy of life, but scarcely humour.

On the other hand, in *We are Seven* Wordsworth experiments on creating a sort of delicate humour out of a child's innocence in a tale inherently pathetic. A sad, yet sweet, smile was definitely there on the poet's lips when he argued in vein with the girl of eight that they were at the moment only five brothers and sisters, as Jane and John had died and were lying in their graves.

The poet begins solemnly :

‘—A simple child,
What should she know
Of death?’

But a sad kind of humour results from the poet's playful questioning and her persistent conviction of the accuracy of her calculation. When the child finishes her simple narration of the occasions of the deaths of a sister and a brother, buried in the churchyard not far from their cottage door, the poet interrogates jokingly :

“How many are you, then,
If they two are in heaven?”

Prompt comes the little maid's reply, reasserting the correctness of her heart's arithmetic :

“O Master ! We are seven.”

A child's healthy reactions to ordinary phenomena of Nature amuse the poet. The moon is the source of such happiness and amusement in *An Evening Walk*. The poet is having a leisurely walk by the Grasmere Lake in the evening. He finds in a shed a beggar woman with her infants crying in their sleepiness. The poor mother, by pointing to the gliding moon in the clear sky above, makes the children stop crying and look up smiling :

“I see her now, denied to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed,
Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to the gliding moon on high.”

It is the innocent smile of the child at the fresh and serene beauty of the rising moon, which has ever been the source of a pure delight, when pointed by a mother to her little one, in every age and clime. While this simple sight sets Wordsworth's mind to his usual theorizing on Nature's influence on man, his lips, we imagine, twitch slightly in a silent amused smile. Here, as in many other places, Wordsworth's humour is buoyed up by ‘a rich earthiness, a robust awareness of the joy of things that warms the heart.’ Humour is almost equated to the joy of life.

A violent, as much as a tranquil, setting of Nature may affect a child in the same way to delight, and an adult is amused at such a childish reaction. In *Address to a Child, During a Boisterous Winter Evening, By My Sister* the poet is caught in a light, joking mood, addressing a child, being taken to bed, while a storm is raging outside. As the wind knocks hard at the doors and windows, the child will not get frightened, but it will, in the company of the adults, rather enjoy and laugh at the discomfiture of the giant being refused admission, knocking in vain :

“Come now we'll to bed ! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care ?

He may knock at the door,—we'll not let him in ;
 May drive at the windows,—we'll laugh at his din. '

As to mighty powers of Nature like the storm, so to little, odd creatures like frogs and cats and owls, a child's naive reactions are no less amusing to elders. But the poet's mood is not tuned properly in the poem with this long title, *Loving and Liking : Irregular verses, Supposed to have been addressed to a child By the Poet's Sister :*

"A frog leaps out from bordering grass,
 Startling the timid as they pass,

... ..

Say not you love a roasted fowl,
 But you may love a screaming owl,
 And, if you can, the unwieldy toad
 That crawls from his secure abode."

The poet misses the lighter side of the child's response, the funny sight of a child poking, stoning, teasing and being amused with such small, shabby creatures as flies and frogs ; Wordsworth rather dwells on the child's innocent love for simple things of Nature.

He, however, seems to be in the right temper, not really in good humour, but in a light, gladsome mood in *The Kitten and Falling Leaves*. His infant daughter, Laura, is in the poet's arms. He amuses the child with a little funny show—a kitten on the wall, as it sports with leaves falling from a lofty elder tree :

"See the kitten on the wall,
 Sporting with the leaves that fall.

... ..

But the kitten, how she starts,
 Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts !"

The kitten play simultaneously with three or four leaves with remarkable skill and agility, like a conjurer, playing at a time with three or four balls or knives. This image has been admirably treated by another writer of the Romantic Age. Hazlitt draws at length the picture of one of the *Indian Jugglers* performing his show with half a dozen brass balls kept in the air by the dexterity of his hands. Here Wordsworth also, through a comparison, lightly touches upon the feats of such a fellow playing at the market place or street corner, surrounded by a big crowd clapping in admiration of his performance. The little kitten, absorbed in its pretty movements in the sheer joy of life, does not care for any applause of the by-standers :

"Quick as he in feats of art,
 Far beyond in joy of heart,

Were her antics played in the eye
 Of a thousand standers—by ;
 Clapping hands with shout and stare.
 What would little Tabby care
 For the plaudits of the crowd ?”

Children in their relation to men, in their contact with adults, might easily provide situations of humour. But Wordsworth rarely utilizes such opportunities for comic effects. He seems to approach a congenial mood in the short sketch, *To the Rev. Robert Jones, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge*, in which the holy man is represented as intimate with and frolicsome in the company of children. Though belonging to the sedate priestly rank, and an Academician too, he is not grave and repelling to children : they have an easy access to him, and he is quite familiar and genial at the cottage table ; they enjoy his playful manners and he enjoys joking at them :

“Back from his sight no bashful children steal,
 He sits a brother at the cottage meal.
 His humble looks no shy restraint impart ;
 Around him plays at will the virgin heart.”

By ‘virgin heart’ Wordsworth in all probability means the fresh mind of children or rustics communicating freely to the august scholar mixing with them unreservedly. But may we not strain a bit to read in “the virgin heart” a coy village maiden confiding her delicate secrets to and seeking counsel of the holy father ?

The sight of his own sporting child, however, does not throw the poet into a lightness of mood, but induces grave thoughts. Even when writing to his little daughter, Dora, Wordsworth is not found in a loving, indulgent frame of mind, as would have been natural to a father. He is with her one late summer afternoon in an arbour : she is playing freely before him. This is the situation in *The Longest Day : Addressed to my Daughter*. He enjoys the innocent sports of the child :

“Dora ! sport, as thou sportest,
 On this platform, light and free,
 Take thy bliss, while longest, shortest
 Are indifferent to thee.”

But the child's happy feeling does not inspire in the father a responsive merry mood, but yields characteristically to Wordsworthian didacticism :

“Be thou wiser, youthful Maiden !”

The philosophical father even reminds the child in her present buoyancy of spirit of the heavy thoughts of Death and God, not to be

forgotten under the lure of beauty and pleasure on all sides :

“And when thy decline shall come,
Let not flowers, or boughs fruit-laden,
Hide the knowledge of thy doom.

...
Bending low before the Donor,
Lord of heaven's unchanging year.”

As Wordsworth's poetic theme shifts from infancy and childhood to boyhood and youth, the tone of humour becomes more pronounced and frequent. The source of inspiration is now not simply innocence but rather idiocy, even maliciousness. And so the risible element often lapses into crude comicality.

In *There was a Boy* it is the innocent sport of a boy imitating the hooting of owls that provides amusement for us. The boy, aged about twelve, on many an evening, stands alone beneath the trees,

“With fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blows mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him.”

The owls do respond lusciously :

“And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long haloos, and screams, and echoes loud,
Redoubled and redoubled ;
Concourse wild
Of jocund din !”

We too are amused and smile gently at the boy's playful mimicry.

If innocence be simply pleasing, stupidity can be positively humorous. *The Idiot Boy* is a genuine comic creation of Wordsworth's fancy. It is 'an attempt to make an idiot the hero of a story.' Though it traces 'the maternal passion through many of its more subtle windings,' it is essentially a rustic mock epic. Wordsworth meant it to be an amusing poem ; he noted that he 'never wrote anything with so much glee' (A. B. Grosart : *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, III. 27)

The mother is proud of her idiot child. Wordsworth hints at 'Betty's pride in one of his pleasant bits of humour.' She,

“Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more
To any that might need it.” (134-136).

Out of sheer idiocy the boy forgets his serious business, rambles, 'burrs', rides face backward, and would pluck a star and carry it in his pocket. He is a purely laughable figure. As Betty Foy puts him on horse-back one March evening to call the doctor for ailing Susan Gale, his lips burr in joy. Without boot or spur, John, the Idiot Boy, rides the pony and shakes a green holly bough in his hand with a funny hurly-burly. About this famous charger of Johny Foy a contemporary reviewer said, 'a horse that thinks. ...The horses of Mars were never harnessed with such pomp, pride and circumstance' (*New Monthly Magazine XIV*).

Wordsworth intends the sight to be amusing as he describes the loving mother fondly watching the gentle horse move on, while her Johny's lips go on burring loud and constant in an idiotic mechanical fashion :

"Burr, burr—now Johny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it ;
Meek as a lamb the pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens, glad to hear it."

The Idiot Boy is a 'natural' in the Shakespearean sense, a 'vehicle of humour like Dogberry or Don Quixote.' Johny

"Now, perhaps, is hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he." (327-328)

The whole presentation is a parody of Knight-errantry.

As this merry messenger goes on his serious errand of calling the doctor from the town for the sick neighbour, he is unconscious of the gravity of the situation : he burrs chiming with the hooting owls :

"The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
As on he goes beneath the moon."

Johny is such a 'half-wise', half-witted fellow that he may clean forget his job, and

"Climb an oak
Where he will stay till he is dead."

Pity Susan Gale, even Betty Foy, as we may, we can not help being amused at Johny's stupid antics. The worried mother leaves groaning Susan and goes in search of her brave Knight. She even rails at poor Susan for causing all the trouble by falling ill. An encounter with the doctor makes a poignantly humorous scene :

"Oh Sir ! You know I'm Betty Foy,
And I have lost my poor dear Boy,
You know him—him often see ;
He's not so wise as some folks be."

"The devil take his wisdom !" said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
"What, Woman ! should I know of him ?"
And, grumbling, he went back to bed." (254-261),

The imbecile child meanwhile has not gone to the doctor in the town, but he moves wildly in the down. He roams about aimlessly and climbs peaks to pluck a star from the heavens to bring it home in his pocket :

"He with his Pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home."

The poet may still retain his solemn looks, but the reader smiles spontaneously at this childish project.

Or, the funny fancy possesses him of riding the horse in a queer posture—the rider's back turned towards the bridle and his face towards the tail of the animal :

"Perhaps he's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
All silent as a horseman ghost,
He travels slowly down the vale."

A circus clown, imitating his feat, could make a galleryful of juvenile spectators burst into roaring laughter.

Or, the next moment he energises himself into a wild gallop :

"Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He's galloping away, away,
And so will gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil !"

At last Betty finds him out, sitting upright on his horse, feeding freely by a waterfall. The mother

"Darts, as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the Horse "

(374-375).

As the mother, moved emotionally on finding her lost child, holds him fast, the Idiot Boy, unaffected as ever,

"...burrs, and laughs abund."
And we join in the laughter.
As for ailing Susan, whom her neighbours left in neglect,
"As her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body—it grew better" (415-416).

And finally, miraculously healed, she too came in search of the valiant messenger. And the three were happily united.

The very impromptu nature of rhymes in the poem is itself an index of the total lack of seriousness in the poet's fancy, e.g., "fiddle-faddle : saddle", "Shocked her : Doctor"

To the pure idiocy of the boy, Johnny, Wordsworth has added a touch of maliciousness in the youth, Harry, in the little tale, *Goody Blake and Harry Gill*. His teeth chattering in all the seasons of the year and his eyes prying into the movements of his neighbour betray an unkindly heart taking a fiendish pleasure in embarrassing the aged woman.

It is a true story of a youngman who catches red-handed a poor, old neighbour stealing wood from his fencing, while collecting fuel for herself. Ethically and circumstantially it is quite a serious affair, But the picture of the youngman, his teeth chattering in chill or anger, and his hands holding fast the old dame by her arms and giving her a violent shake in the very act of thieving, becomes highly comical in effect.

Though young, he suffers from chattering teeth, winter and summer, all the year round :

'In March, December, and in July
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill ;
The neighbours, tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter chatter, still."

Highly amusing is the poet's delineation of the youth's alertness in catching the thief :

"And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watched to seize old Goody Blake.
And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand ;

... ..

He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again ?—on tip toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'tis Goody Blake ;

... ..

Right glad was he when he beheld her ;
Stick after stick did Goody pull :
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about.
The by-way back again to take ;
He started forward, with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he held her fast,
 And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
 And cried, "I've caught you then at last !"

The story runs like a mock-serious thriller of crime-and-detection for the amusement of juvenile readers.

Leg-pulling of or oblique hits at elderly people, for humorous effects, are not altogether rare in Wordsworth's poetry. There is, for instance, a sly hint at the Don in *To The Rev. Robert Jones, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge*. The dancing girls' guesses about him have an overt slant towards humour :

"While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
 The Maidens eye him with enquiring glance,
 Much wondering by what fit of crazing care,
 Or desperate love, bewildered, he came *there*."

'There' obviously stands for the village dance party which he attends ; it may as well refer to the holy orders taken by him. Is he 'there', speculate the maidens, on having been jilted in love ?

Humorous too is the sketch of the tourists in *The Brothers*. The humble priest of Ennerdale speaks to Jane about tourists visiting their locality. Perhaps the holy father is himself in a serious, moralising mood. But the portraits strike us definitely in a humorous way ;

"These Tourists, heaven preserve us ! needs must live
 A profitable life : some glance along,
 Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
 And they were butterflies to wheel about
 Long as the Summer lasted : some as wise,
 Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
 Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
 Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,
 Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
 Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn."

Tourists flitting about lightly like butterflies, so long as summer lasts, may be just a picture of felicity, such as we come across everywhere in Wordsworth's poetry. But the figure of one perched on a projectory of a hill, and with a pencil in hand and a book on the knee, and for hours scribbling or sketching tends to induce a gentle smile in the reader. The portrait has a comic touch. The clever chiasmus—"look and scribble, scribble on and look"—intensifies that humorous effect with a tinge of satire.

In the section, 'The Personage' of *The Excursion*, Book VIII, the playful comparison of the Wanderer to a mediaeval Knight appears to have been instituted in a humorous tone. The Pastor invites the roving man

and his companion, the Solitary, to his house :

“But let us hence ! my dwelling is in sight,
And there—”

The Solitary is not inclined to comply with this request ; he does not accept the invitation ; he rallies his companion, the Wanderer, and playfully draws a comparison between his itinerant profession and the way of life of the mediaeval Knight-errant :

“The Solitary shrunk. He said
To his Compatriot, smiling as he spake,
‘The peaceable remains of this good Knight
Would be disturbed
If consciousness could reach him
That one had dared to couple...
The fine vocation of the sword and lance
With the gross aims and body-bending toil
Of a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
Pitied and despised the two estates
Are graced with some resemblance.”

Like the Knight-errants these Itinerants also relieve and help people by

“Raising savage life
To rustic, and the rustic to urbane.”

They give advice, carry news, soothe and console people : what greater service the Knights could render ?—

“Counsel is given ; pleasant tidings bring :
Could the proud guest of chivalry do more ?”

The apparently serious comparison of the Wanderer with the Knight of old and the elaboration of the kind deeds done by the former are in a humorous tone. Behind the apparently innocent expression, ‘pleasant tidings bring’ lurks an unsaid joking banter at the Wanderer’s habit of spreading rumours and indulging in slanderous gossip.

Of Wordsworth’s humorous sketches of adult fools the figure of Peter Bell is a close rival of the Idiot Boy. Peter’s stupidity, the poet is convinced, is incorrigible, and cannot be cured by all the experiences of his life :

“He travelled here, he travelled there ;—
But not the value of a hair
Was heart or head the better.”

Wordsworth’s observation on Peter echoes Dryden’s humorous—satiric characterization of Shadwell as stupid Mac Flecknoe who never strays into sense :

“Shadwell alone of all my sons is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity

The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense."

Peter is a specimen not only of the unintentionally ludicrous but also of 'grim and savage humour.'

The awkwardness of Peter is aggravated by associating him with an ass, a proverbial image of stupidity. The rascal and the ass are the 'central characters' of the poem; and it is difficult to say who is the true hero. Wordsworth draws lightly a series of funny scenes in describing Peter's encounter with a stray donkey, erratic and obstinate by the very nature of the species.

On finding a solitary ass in the wilderness, Peter shouts in joy, "A Prize!" And noticing a halter round its neck, he readily mounts on it and urges the beast to move, but in vain:

"Peter leapt
Upon the Creature's back, and plied
With ready heels his shaggy side;
But still the Ass his station kept."

Absorbed in the solemn tranquillity of the scene around in the right Wordsworthian spirit, the silly beast records 'his protest by shaking gently one of his long lateral appendages. There prevails silence far and near,

"Only the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turns round his long left ear."

Wordsworth must have been a close observer of the physiognomy of the asinine species.

All efforts of Peter in instigating the beast to motion fail. A sturdy blow being administered by the rider, the Ass "Dropped gently down upon his knees", and then "With legs stretched out stiff he lay"—a grand, awkward sight, enough to make the gravest of mortals burst into laughter.

Peter is naturally provoked into a rage by this obstinacy and insubordination of the beast of burden. And the sight of an angry man is always comical. Is not the figure of over-wrought Lear in the raging storm, with its inherent pity, and all its cosmic grandeur and sublimity, just comical on the stage? What else can be the reader's reaction to observing Peter shaking in fury? His

"lips with fury quiver;
Quoth he 'you little mulish dog,
I'll fling your carcass like a log
Head-foremost down the river!'"

And the awkwardness of the dance pose is punctuated by the quaintness of the accompanying music. Responding to Peter's cursing,

"the ass sent forth
A long and clamorous bray !"

And as Peter applied his demoniac power to egg the beast on,

"The Ass did lengthen out
More ruefully a deep-drawn shout,
The hard dry sea-saw of his horrible bray !"

Such pranks in the setting of an essentially grave and tragic tale, and in the supremely moralising story of the magic conversion of a ruffian into an honest man, are highly ludicrous and enjoyable.

At last the recalcitrant beast obeys the rider's lash. But what a disconcertingly irregular movement ! The rogue of a simpleton, the Potter or Hawker of earthenware, mounted on the Ass, and started beating it furiously, now to check its wildness, and the poor beast began to groan and jump in utter desperation. Is not the situation highly comical ?—

"All by the moonlight river side
Groaned the poor Beast—alas in vain ;
The staff was raised to loftier height,
And the blows fell with heavier might
As Peter struck—and struck again.
'Hold !' cried the Squire, 'against the rules
Of common sense you're surely sinning ;
This leap is for us all too bold ;
Who Peter was, let that be told."

—He is no less a person than an august hawker of earthenware !

A little later comes the picture of Peter Bell, now dancing his round with Highland lasses, at the next moment lying beside his asses on lofty Cheviot Hill :

"And Peter, by the mountain-rills,
Had danced his round with Highland lasses ;
And he had lain beside his asses
On lofty Cheviot Hill."

It is a portrait not simply of a merry chap but also of a comical fool. The very rhyming of 'lasses' with 'asses' has a mild ring of humour about it.

Both wildness and comicality must there be in the poet's mind when he characterizes Peter as a chastiser of a dozen wives, none of whom dares approach him in fear of his roughness or for his solid stupidity !—

"Of all that lead a lawless life,
Of all that love their lawless lives,
In city or in village small,
He was the wildest far of all ;—
Nay start not !—wedded wives—and twelve !

But how one wife could e'er come near him,
In simple truth I can not tell."

Wordsworth had actually heard of a man who had twelve wives. 'What was to him factual becomes comic material in the matrix of his poem'. Peter's dozen wives remind one of the multiple marital experiences of Chaucer's Wife of Bath.

Both *Peter Bell* and *Goody Blake and Harry Gill* are illustrations of the strain of bitter comedy in Wordsworth's humour. 'It combines an awareness of active evil with the comic vision. It is at once sophisticated and grotesque'.

Of old people cutting comical figures Goody Blake, caught in the very act of thieving, blends pity with humour. Her male counterpart is met in old Daniel in *The Two Thieves ; or the Last Stage of Avarice*, an amusing sketch of two ill-sorted kleptomaniacs.

It is a tale of an old man of over ninetythree and his little grandson of three. The innocence of childhood and the dotage of senility naturally provide humour of the simplest and purest kind. The poet introduces the couple of thieves in a mock-serious tone :

"The one, yet unbreeched, is not three birthdays old,
His Grandsire that age more than thirtytimes told."

This unequal pair enters into a partnership in thieving :

"There are ninety good seasons of fair and foul weather
Between them, and both go a-pilfering together."

And what might be the covetable booties of such peerless pilferers ? These were, curiously enough, the most petty trifles, like small chips of timber, scattered from the carpenter's filings, or little handfuls of soil picked from heaps dumped before a neighbour's door :

"With chips is the carpenter strewing his floor ?
Is a cartload of turf at an old woman's door ?
Old Daniel his hand to the treasure will slide !
And his Grandson's as busy at work by his side."

And how much does the poet enjoy, and lets the reader share his joy, in visualizing the aged pilferers *modus operandi*, his sleight of hand in the business !—

"Old Daniel begins ; he stops short—and his eye,
Through the lost look of dotage, is cunning and shy."

They are out in their venture quite early in the day, and the people of the locality are amused at the very sight of these strange comrades at their work :

"The pair sally forth hand in hand : ere the sun
Has peered o'er the beeches, their work is begun ;

They through the streets with deliberate tread,
 And each, in his turn becomes leader or led ;
 And, wherever they carry their plots and their wiles,
 Every face in the village is dimpled with smiles".

And we smile too in amused tolerance when an aggrieved neighbour complains, perhaps more in jest than in earnest, to their kindhearted natural guardian, the senile sire's daughter and the tiny child's mother, who, let us imagine, takes both the culprits severely to task and renders three-fold recompense to the wronged ! This idea of making good the petty depredations of dotage and infancy is naturally born of Wordsworth's innate moralising tendency.

But the most enjoyable humour at the cost of an aged man comes in a joking reference to an old man in his dotage doing *female service* to the infant son of his declining years. Whenever a child comes into a scene, the serious poet in Wordsworth suspends his gravity of mood for a moment, and indulges a little in a lighter vein, himself smiling gently and bringing a soft smile on the reader's lips. *Michael* is a thoroughly pathetic tale. Still it affords the poet one flickering moment of amusement in describing the old shepherd's over-solicitude in attending upon the infant son of his old age, doing to the baby 'female service' with untrained hands, not as young fathers do in sport :

"For often times
 Old Michael, while he [Luke] was a babe in arms,
 Had done him female service, not alone
 For pastime and delight, as is the use of fathers."

At this casual reference to 'female service' we guess and smile. And the contrast to other (? younger) fathers doing this sort of work 'for pastime and delight' is unfailing in its humorous hit.

Wordsworth's normal mood as a poet is imaginative and reflective, always, serene, whether matter-of-fact or dreamy or remote and transcendental. But at odd moments his fancy plays tricks, touching the varied chords of humour, ranging from the purely farcical or physically ludicrous to a shrewd intellectual perception of incongruities, bordering on satire, from ballad simplicity and gaiety to serious thoughtfulness, even cynicism.

Here is a scene physically farcical in *The Waggoner*, III. A donkey, kicking behind, is glorified as saluting with hind legs :

"The Ass, uplifting a hind hoof,
 Salutes the Mastiff on the head ;
 And so were better manners bred,
 And all was calm and quieted."

This representation of a vulgar act in refined language smacks of an

Eliaish relish in a funny scene. This whimsical comedy is appropriately dedicated to Charles Lamb, since Wordsworth here keeps the obvious moral of the poem, the perils of alcoholism, under control. The veteran lover of wine, old Benjamin, has always dropped into his favourite inn, 'Dove and Olive Bough'. But now the place, having lost its old character, has no longer any fascination for him : it is now converted into 'Dove Cottage', the sober home of a 'water-drinking Bard,' a decline at which the Waggoner

"Shrugs his shoulders, shakes his head,
And, for the honest folks within,
It is a doubt with Benjamin
Whether they be alive or dead !" (i. 66-69).

Many of Wordsworth's scenes with children pick up the tone of nursery rhymes. So are the following : a child enjoying the sight of frogs leaping (in *Loving and Liking*), a kitten playing with falling leaves (in *The Kitten and Falling Leaves*), and a child assuming a grave, chastising look (in *Characteristics of a Child Three Years Old*). Or, it is a playful fantasy of a figure sailing in a queer-shaped boat through the clouds and laughing at observers on the ground below, such as we meet in the Prologue to *Peter Bell*. This sailor in the crescent-tipped canoe who laughs at the pointed horns of his vessel till his ribs ache, has descended directly from the Disney Land of the fairy tale world :

"There's something in a flying horse,
There's something in a huge balloon,
But through the clouds I'll never float
Until I have a little Boat,
Shaped like the crescent-moon.
But if perchance your faith should fail,
Look up—and you shall see me soon !
Meanwhile untroubled I admire
The pointed horns of my canoe ;
And, did not pity touch my breast,
To see how ye are all distrest,
Till my ribs ached, I'd laugh at you."

There is ballad-like simplicity and gaiety too in *Peter Bell* and *The Idiot Boy*, and simplicity minus gaiety, with innocence added, in *We are Seven*.

Purely intellectual humour or wit, a special characteristic of eighteenth century verse, is not normally expected in Wordsworth's poetry. But once or twice he has created a situation with critical consciousness of the lack of proportion or balance in the conduct of people, almost exposing themselves to ridicule. It is possible to be seriously attentive to one

thing and foolishly careless in other matters simultaneously, like the fabled philosopher looking upto the sky and studying the stars, while walking on the earth and blindly falling into a well.

John E. Jordan cites *Power of Music* as a humorous sketch in which Wordsworth's persistent didactic drive proves too strong for him to resist the temptation to editorialize ! It is, according to him, a pleasantly humorous picture of a London street musician, that suggests a moral :

"An Orpheus ! an Orpheus ! Yes, Faith may grow bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of old ;—

Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same

In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name." (1-4).

It is as well possible to interpret Wordsworth's *Power of Music*, like Dryden's *St. Cecilia's Day*, as a serious poem, celebrating the power of music, to which the former, unlike his predecessor, gives a humorous twist, while the earlier poet sustains dignity of tone all through the poem, the Romantic poet suffers his verse to land into the ludicrous. A musician plays in Oxford Street. Every passer-by, captivated by the power of music, neglects his or her errand, and listens to the tune with rapt attention. The tone of the poet, serious enough at the start, glides into a lighter mood towards the end :

"The Newsman is stopped, though he stops on the fret ;

And the half-breathless Lamp-lighter—he is in the net !

The Porter sits down on the weight which he bore ;

The Lass with her barrow wheels hither her store ;—

If a thief could be here he might pilfer at ease."

The total absorption in music and the resultant opportunity for thieving make the situation comical.

A rare kind of humour, not resembling those categorised so far, is approached in Wordsworth's little piece, *To The Spade of a Friend*. Born of a heightened treatment of a petty trifle, it does not, however, rise as high as a mock-heroic poem. It has not the slightest touch of satire, and the mood is not sustained.

The poet speculates on the next master of a simple agricultural implement, a spade, when its present owner dies :

"Who shall inherit Thee

When death has laid

Low in the darksome cell thine own dear lord ?

That man will have a trophy

Nobler than a conqueror's sword.

Thou monument of peaceful happiness !"

There is speculation too on the fate of the spade when it will no longer

remain service-worthy. Will it be thrown away ignominiously in the obscurity of an ante-room into a heap of useless lumber? No, it is to be fondly preserved as a precious heraldic trophy in an honoured place in the rustic dwelling :

“And, when thou art past service, worn away,
No dull oblivious nook shall hide thy fate,
An heir loom in his cottage wilt thou be :
High will he hang thee up, well pleased to adorn
His rustic chimney with the last of Thee !”

Sometimes Wordsworth indulges in the mock-heroic, as in the parody of Nelson's military adventure in Section ii of *The Waggoner*. Here the sailor improvises a wheeled model of *The Vanguard*, Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Nile, which he demonstrates in the fashion of Corporal Trim. When the bosom pair start out again, they soon tether the sailor's ass, dragging the model ship, behind the Waggon, so that now they have THE VANGUARD, following close behind. (ii. 68).

'The impulse to parody turns to the mock-heroic. Benjamin is called a Conqueror, and despite a series of admonitory omens he is finally the victim of malicious Fates. He is surrounded by a protective mist' such as

“Never golden-haired Apollo
Pleased some favourite chief to follow.” (iv. 108-109)

The Poet calls upon his Muse, and indulges in a heightened language :

“Now, heroes, for the true commotion,
The triumph of your late devotion
Can aught on earth impede delight,
Still mounting to a higher height ;
And higher still—a greedy flight !
Can any low-born care pursue her,
Can any mortal clog come to her ?” (iii. 22-28)

'The mock-heroic strain, this ironic tongue-in-cheek tone, appears in many of Wordsworth's lines, occasionally even in poems essentially serious'.

Heightened treatment glorifies a little fly in *Written in Germany*. The 'disconsolate creature',

“His spindles sink under him, foot, leg, and thigh !
His eyesight and hearing are lost ;
Between life and death his blood freezes and thaws :
And his two pretty pinions of blue dusky gauze
Are glued to his sides by the frost.” (21-25).

In *The Contrast* a similar heightened treatment is given to a simple parrot. So in *The Excursion*, V, a mighty uproar is heard in the hills. It must

made by a 'bold hero' doing some adventurous exploit. What an anticlimax when the imagined hero turns out to be just a boy pushing rocks' over a cliff. (436-438). There is also here an 'account of courtship couched in highflown nautical terminology so that the romance weathers currents, rocks, shoals, cross winds, and squalls.'

If Wordsworth does not indulge in satirical humour, in a stray passage in *Inscriptions supposed to be found in and near a Hermit's Cell* he betrays an attitude of half-humorous and half-serious cynicism. Are the characterizations of Hope, Fear, Glory, Friendship, Youth and Peace conceived in the hermit's ascetic cynicism and renunciation of the material world? Or, does this pretended tone of disgust and disillusionment proceed from a lighter, humorous vein in the poet? All these high abstractions confront us perpetually as mighty forces besetting us with baffling problems at every step of life. Yet how lightly are these dressed in delicate and telling imagery!—

"What is truth?—a stuff rejected;
Duty?—an unwelcome clog;
Joy?—a moon by fits reflected
In a swamp or watery bog."

The ironic variety of Wordsworth's humour perilously verges on satire. While indulging in wit, it tends rather easily to verbal play and has less 'comic warmth'. *Rob Roy's Grave* is such 'a jovial poem with an ironic bite to it':

"A famous man is Robin Hood,
The English ballad-singer's joy!
And Scotland has a thief as good."

Rob Roy followed 'the simple plan':

"That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

From innocence to idiocy, from a soft, sympathetic smile at human frailties to a shrewd shrug at individual idiosyncrasy or mischievousness, from crude farcicality to subtle insinuations, from light fairy fancy to grave cynicism approaching satire—it presents a complete cycle in the evolution of Wordsworth's lighter vein, parallel to the progress of the poet's soul from Romantic imagination and hopefulness to utter despair and disillusionment.

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DICKENS THE CONJURER

S. C. SEN

I

THE late Mr Edwin Muir observed in a piece of perceptive criticism what gave value to Micawber's oft-repeated words 'in case anything turned up' and those of Mrs Micawber 'I never will desert Mr Micawber': To bring home the contrast between these expressions and the—words put into the mouth of a character by a writer of this century he referred to a novel the hero of which said constantly, 'I'll plough up the bit of gorse'. Muir pointed out that the characters of the nineteenth century novelist repeated what had once expressed a true personal feeling but the later novelist made his character utter a sentiment conveying a social image, which was very different from a personal feeling. As a result of this he did not succeed in making the words sound authentic in the mouth of his hero.

We shall quote a few other examples from Dickens, which will reveal how the novelist exploited the technique without falling into the error which the more recent writer committed and thereby produced a caricature rather than a living character. Mrs Gummidge (in *David Copperfield*) says, 'I am a lone lorn creetur...and everythink goes contrairy with me'. To this class will also belong Uriah Heep's words 'We are so very 'umble' but these latter have certain other implications, which are worth a comment.

Uriah Heep realized the lowliness of his station and did not like to quarrel with it. With an adroitness to which surely life offers parallels he set about using humility as a mask for his ambition, which later manifested itself in a criminal form. He was guarding himself against envy, which as Helmut Shoenck (in "Der Neid, Eine Theorie der Gesellschaft") has tried to show after an exhaustive inquiry will flourish even in the most egalitarian society, so ingrained is it in human nature and for Uriah Heep this concealment was essential to the success of his wicked plans. He describes how this 'umbleness' came to be a part and parcel of his nature. In this statement he may be telling the truth:

"When I was quite a little boy, said Uriah, "I got to know what umbleness did, and I took to it. I ate umble pie with an appetite. I sotpped at the umble point of my learning, and says I, 'Hold hard!'

'When you offered to teach me Latin, I knew better'. 'People like to be above you', says father, 'keep yourself down'. I am very umble to the present moment, Master Copperfield, but I've got a little power'.

Characters like Micawber and Mrs. Micawber are designated as flat characters in the critical language applied by learned scholars. The word belongs to the sphere of painting where its use has an obvious justification in terms of the medium and the result it produces. For labelling characters in a novel or play it does not seem to have an equal measure of success. In life no-one has a flat character in the painterly sense. It is of course true that some make a greater impression than others and it is certain that if we met Mr or Mrs Micawber in actual life we would not have spoken of flatness as their distinctive quality.

But I am not perhaps just to the critical position. For the term does not detract from the character to which it is applied whereas flatness may easily be insipidity and a mode of denunciation. I wish to point out that even when it is used with right critical precision it is far from apposite as a label for any character. What the novelist does with regard to such characters is to draw them with a single masterly stroke and it is the sharpness of the delineation that we admire and we are not therefore rewarded if we borrow from painting a word which half buries the impression.

The characteristic of the Dickensian world is that it bustles with life and although the author does not offer what we may describe as a philosophical attitude, we can hardly allege this against him as deficiency. For the vitality is so triumphant that all darkness is swept out of the mind. In this respect we may say that Dickens has found that for him and for his men and women there is no need for the consolations of philosophy. The following passage (which is certainly not one of the gloomiest in Dickens) we may find some corroboration for the statement :

"I have known him (Micawber) come home to supper with a flood of tears, and a declaration that nothing was now left but a jail ; and go to bed making a calculation of the expense of putting bow-windows to the house, 'in case anything turned up', which was his most favourite expression."

We have no reason to regret that Dickens is so often content to be unphilosophical. His attitude is the reverse of Edward Youngs (in his "Night Thoughts") :

To know the world, not love her, is thy point ;
She gives but little, nor that little, long.

Dickens had an endless curiosity for the world, which meant for him, the

London of his day. Even when he contemplated misery and suffering, he did not condemn life as its source.

II

The novels of Dickens are well known and to write about them at this late hour may be profitless except in so far the attempt may lead to a revival of the pleasures which all readers of Dickens have known. I am, therefore, taking up his "Sketches by Boz Illustrative of Every-day Life and Every-day People", for making a few observations as the work does not appear to have received much critical attention and may therefore offer an opportunity for making a few remarks which will not be altogether stale. It is not to be wondered at that even this early and comparatively obscure work has not failed to stimulate some writers of the present century. For an authentic observer of life, such as Dickens was, would always delight the reader and aid creative work in the future. Such testimony of a later time is a significant confirmation of artistic achievement. We shall quote a few sentences from *Sketches By Boz* (Ch. III):

The four Miss Willises were courted in due form by... Mr Robinson... the neighbours were perfectly frantic in their anxiety to discover which of the four Miss Willises was the fortunate fair... the difficulty they experienced in solving the problem was not at all lessened by the announcement of the eldest Miss Willis,—"*We are going to marry Mr Robinson*"...

"The old gentlemen of silkworm notoriety did not hesitate to express his decided opinion that Mr Robinson was of Eastern descent, and contemplated marrying the whole family at once".

It will be hardly an exaggeration to say that Mr Charles Lee's "Mr Sampson", a play in one act, is almost entirely based upon Dickens's account of *The Four Sisters*, from which the above passage has been quoted. There are however only two sisters (Catherine Stevens and Caroline Stevens) in this drama both of whom are wooed by their paying guest Mr Sampson. He cannot at the end make up his mind as to whom to choose: "The pair of 'e rolled up together 'ud make a complete masterpiece; a man couldn't look for a better wife than what the two of 'e 'ud make. That's where 'tis; nor I can't see no way out of it—not in a Christian country. (Meditatively). Ah! These heathen Turks—they know a thing or two after all, don't they?" Even the name Sampson is quite close in sound to Dickens's Robinson.

The next comment I shall make is about a case of probable influence, which I do not think, is capable of being proved. I am thinking of T. S. Eliot's poem "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" in which the hours of the night—Twelve o' clock, Half-past one, Half-past two, Half-past three

and Four o' clock—are associated in the poet's mind with certain sights in London Streets. Eliot's approach is psychological and is based upon some features of city-life, which offer an earlier projection of his 'West-Land'. In Dickens ("Sketches by Boz"), Chapter II is about "The Street-Night". His observations are also made hour-wise : "It is nearly eleven o' clock, and the cold rain which has been drizzling so long, is beginning to pour down in good earnest". "One o' Clock ! Parties returning from the different theatres foot it through the muddy streets". "Scenes like these are continued until three or four o'clock in the morning ; and even when they close, fresh ones open to the inquisitive novice".

What I think can be claimed in behalf of Dickens is that he has suggested an area of observation and has taken the night as his temporal background for the purpose. London of 1836 is very different from London about a hundred years later apart from the fact that Dickens and Eliot are as different as two human beings can be. There is also the fact that one does not write the same things in verse as one does in prose. When these circumstances are conceded I think we shall still find some indication of influence which cannot be easily denied.

III

To see what the book says is of course an important method of approach for assessment of its value ; another is to observe how it says it. I shall make an attempt at this twofold approach avoiding the implication that I am about to enter a field with which the readers are unacquainted. There is always something to be said in favour of a new witness who endeavours to place on record his experience honestly.

The first section of "Boz" is called "Our Parish" and is divided into seven chapters. The picture of the parish occasionally recalls the primordial state of innocence although it will not be correct to assume that it was the author's governing attitude when he wrote it. In Chapter I, "The Beadle", there was a case of a chimney on fire. A parish-fire engine was requisitioned to deal with the situation. The operators did not know how to use it. Their innocence was amusing, not ridiculous, for sophistication is advance but how can there be advance on perfection ?

"Bang went the pumps—the people cheered—the beadle perspired profusely ; but it was unfortunately discovered, just as they were going to put the fire out, that nobody understood the process by which the engine was filled with water : and that eighteen boys, and a man, had exhausted themselves in pumping for twenty minutes, without producing the slightest effect !"

The next Chapter "The Curate" also emphasizes the element of inno-

cence : people are not yet tied to external standards as in a sophisticated society in which their outward reaction is always predictable. They behave as they feel and their spontaneity contradicts the social "OUGHTS", developed as a kind of fifth sense under artificial conditions : "Our curate is a young gentleman of such prepossessing appearance, and fascinating manners, that within one month after his first appearance in the parish, half the young-lady inhabitants were melancholy with religion, and the other half desponding with love". 'Melancholy' supposed to be due to an excess of 'black bile', produces among other things, peevishness which may be no more than a form of jealousy. The interpretation may appear objectionable on the ground of its ingenuity but when one understands the spirit the author infuses into the scenes, one will not find the view far-fetched or fanciful. For an introduction to this spirit I shall quote a rather long passage from Ch. IV ("The Election for the Beadle") : "This was the state of affairs in our parish a week or two since, when Simmons, the beadle, suddenly died. The lamented deceased had over-exerted himself, a day or two previously, in conveying an aged female, highly intoxicated, to the strong room of the workhouse. The excitement thus occasioned, added to a severe cold, which this indefatigable officer had caught in his capacity of director of the parish engine, by inadvertently playing over himself instead of a fire, proved too much for a constitution already enfeebled by age ; and the intelligence was conveyed to the Board one evening that Simmons had died, and left his respects".

"Left his respects", the three words which conclude the above passage, are a master-stroke and reveal the author's comic spirit, which may be singled out as a peculiar trait of his genius, which generations of readers have admired most.

The election of the beadle brought two competitors into close conflict. The slogans cried on the occasion were "Timkins for Beadle. Nine small children !!! "But his rival had better claims to public affection having a larger family : " Spruggins for Beadle. Ten small children (two of them twins), and a wife !!! "The infatuated public was little inclined to consider that Bung (or Timkins) could easily have a larger family than Spruggins who was fifty, being then only thirty-five. A little cunning however saved poor Timkins from defeat. In fact, he polled a considerable majority of votes." A great many ladies who were walking leisurely up to the church—for it was a very hot day--to vote for Spruggins, were artfully decoyed into the coaches, and voted for Bung". In spite of the manoeuvre which led to Bung's spectacular victory—the majority attained by him "on the gross pool was four hundred and twenty-eight," the parish still remained a kind of Garden Utopia for us.

There are several exercises in the art of story-telling. They are none of them on an ambitious scale and most design a particular effect, which is modestly realized as Dickens does not seem in them to aim at anything more than comic laughter. A few tell of suffering and death caused by drunkenness, crime and self-indulgence. I think, they belong to an inferior class and betray a tendency to sentimentality, which cannot hold the stage in a more critical and self-conscious world.

The examples are chosen from the section of "Boz" devoted to "Tales".

Cornelius Brook Dingwall, Esq., M. P., discovering that his daughter is about to contract a secret marriage with an undesirable person, sends her to a private boarding school where, he thought, she would be out of reach of her pursuer but contrary to this expectation the young man had free access to the dances and parties organized by the school and he met the girl there on the very day of her arrival and eloped with her shortly afterwards. When Miss Crumptions of Minerva House broke the news to the father he found consolation from a logical formulation at which he arrived after a brief reflection: He "was reluctantly compelled to admit that the untoward result of his admirable arrangements was attributable, not to Miss Crumptions, but his own diplomacy. He however consoles himself, like some other diplomatists, by satisfactorily proving that if his plans did not succeed, they ought to have done so." If the father is an eccentric logic-chopper, the daughter is little likely to make anyone happy or give her lover a sense of having won a treasure, which he could cherish for long. This is the character given to her by the author: "Miss Brook Dingwall was one of that numerous class of young ladies who, like adverbs, may be known by their answering to a commonplace question, and doing nothing else." (Ch. III). The analogy "like adverbs" seems puzzling but we can see that no compliment is meant by the words.

The next tale occurs in Ch. IV and is an account of the Tuggses at Ramsgate—They come into a little fortune by good luck and plan to live more comfortably. In the course of a journey they meet handsome Captain Waters and his handsomer wife Mrs Waters. The husband and wife put their heads together and the Tuggs youth Joseph infatuated by the married woman's good looks is made the target of a conspiracy, which succeeds easily. The Tuggses were as a result blackmailed to the extent of £ 1500. This story shows that Dickens was not ready to think of army men in the way Thackeray thought about them. Of the achievement of the British army and British diplomats his novels tell us little to their credit.

Another tale in Ch. V is about a man called Horatio Sparkins, who

carried himself about with so much loftiness of manner and who frequently mentioned members of the British Aristocracy with such easy familiarity that some of his admirers concluded that he, too, belonged to the same rank. The Malderton family who idolized the hero one day visited a cheap shop, a little nervous that their aristocratic acquaintance might by some chance discover them there and perhaps refuse to have further dealings with them. But as the saying is, the boot was on the other foot. For they met Sparkins under his real name as Mr Samuel Smith being no more than an assistant at the same cheap shop. However much the shock of the discovery, snobbery is an incurable affliction and we are told that "the family have the same predilection for aristocratic personages, with an increased aversion to anything *low*."

In Chapter VII there is a tale, the scene being laid in East Indies, a term often loosely applied to India. It is told by a Captain who claimed to have visited the country but his narrative is obviously a figment of imagination and no fact seems to tally with actual conditions. I give a short excerpt: "When I was in the East Indies", replied the captain—(here was a discovery—he had been in the East Indies !)—"When I was in the East Indies, I was once stopping a few thousand miles up the country, on a visit at the house of a very particular friend of mine, Ram Chowdar Doss Azuph Al Bowlar—a devilish pleasant fellow. As we were enjoying our hookahs one evening, in the cool verandah in front of his villa, we were rather surprised by the sudden appearance of thirty-four of his Kit-ma-gars (for he had a large establishment there), approaching the house with a threatening aspect, and beating a tom-tom." Ram Chowdar's countenance, we are told, assumed a most frightful appearance; "his whole visage was distorted, and his frame shaken by violent emotions, 'Do you see the gum-gum ?' said he." The climax is reached at this point and the story does not proceed further. One of the listeners, Hardy, observed that he thought that a gum-gum had very much the same meaning as a humbug but the threads of the exciting story having snapped, no attempt was made to resume the tale. The hookah, the tom-tom, the kit-ma-gars and the gum-gum supplied the local colour and Hardy's sceptical interpretation could not rob the audience of the excitement, and expectancy for a further measure of the intoxicating Eastern drug.

But these tales with their far-ranging interests are the work of a young journalist. They are pot-boilers but as their author is Dickens, they often rise above the standard of hack-work and show that rightly speaking they are sign-posts for the way onward where the great achievements of the future lay.

IV

The proud city of London, once the centre of a great Empire in which the sun never set had also humble passages in her history, which proclaim her kinship with small towns and lowly cities where nothing very memorable happened and where no power ever installed itself to take control of human destiny. In Dickens we come across a view of the great Capital, which has faded from human memory and is hardly seen elsewhere with an equal measure of vividness. Here for example is a scene of swarming life combined with a simplicity, which is no longer found in the West : "Numbers of men and women (principally the latter), carrying upon their heads heavy baskets of fruit, toil down the park side of Piccadilly, on their way to Covent Garden, and, following each other in rapid succession, form a long straggling line from thence to the turn of the road at Knightsbridge" (*Boz*, Scenes, Ch. I). Again a few lines later : "Here and there, a bricklayer's labourer, with the day's dinner tied up in a handkerchief, walks briskly to his work, and occasionally a little knot of three or four school boys on a stolen bathing expedition rattle merrily over the pavement, their boisterous mirth contrasting forcibly with the demeanour of the little sweep, who, having knocked and rung till his arm aches, and being interdicted by a merciful legislature from endangering his lungs by calling out, sits patiently down on the door-step, until the housemaid may happen to awake".

There is a great volume of social history embedded in these facts. It may be asked if it is proper in a literary study to turn to such facts. For what value can they have in relation to literature ? The objection cannot always be overruled but Dickens was more interested in the larger picture of society than in that of individual men and women. In all his master-pieces of fiction London is a felt presence : a sense of throbbing, animated existence which invades individual life at many levels and communicates a meaning to it.

What trivial innovations led to alarming conflicts ! Here is an example : "We marked the advance of civilisation, and beheld it with a sigh. The eating-house-keeper who manfully resisted the innovation of table-cloths, was losing ground every day, as his opponent gained it, and a deadly feud sprung up between them (*Boz*, Scenes, Ch. IV).

Where the tempo of progress is slow every change is marked and the disappearance of the old may be a just occasion for a sigh, even when what is offered in its place is an improvement.* A writer may sigh in such

* A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* : "The time-span of important change was considerably longer than that of a single human life. Thus mankind was trained to adapt itself to fixed conditions. Today, this time-span is considerably shorter than that of human life, and accordingly, our training must prepare individuals to face a novelty of conditions."

a world of slow change with the assurance that he will have the sympathy of his readers, who will often share his regret. It is different now : for change comes with the power of a tidal bore and sweeps everything before it and we have hardly the time to be familiar with the new scene when it is changed again. In this situation to sigh over a change is an absurd gesture. If there is a new Dickens, he can hardly spend any time sighing over the past.

V

Dickens writes frequently about hackney-coaches and their drivers. Their frequency is not conditioned by the nature of the tale he tells. There are times when one feels that he cannot properly dip into the bustle of the city's life without a bout of hackney-coaches, which overcarry the passenger, throw him out of the seat right into the street or are overturned. The coach-horses and horses in general play pranks, which seemed to give Dickens opportunities for comic observations, some of which still retain their freshness. Some puns also owe to the source but one cannot always claim that they hit the mark. Here is one (*Boz*. CH. VII) which does not seem so inept : "What an interesting book a hackney-coach might produce, if it could carry as much in its head as it does in its body ! That autobiography of a broken-down hackney-coach would surely be as amusing as the autobiography of a broken-down hackneyed dramatist".

Closely related to the above is an account we read under the title "Meditations in Monmouth Street" (*Boz*. CH. VI), which also serves to draw attention to a talent he possessed in an eminent degree. This was the art of conjuring up. As he thought of conjuring up the autobiography of the hackney-coach, in the same spirit he applied this gift to the interpretation of the ownership and history of cast-off clothes, giving evidence of his revealing sympathy with things inanimate. To understand the point better a little introduction may not be out of place.

The above-mentioned chapter begins with the words : "We have always entertained a particular attachment towards Monmouth Street, as the only true and real emporium for second-hand wearing apparel". The author enjoys being in this region, where he can indulge a pleasant reverie on the past : "We love to walk among those extensive groves of the illustrious dead, and to indulge in the speculations to which they give rise". He was trying to fit a pair of lace-up boots on an ideal personage when his eyes happened to alight on a few suits of clothes ranged outside a shop-window. He had a sort of hunch that they belonged to and were worn by the same individual. "The idea seemed a fantastic one, and we looked at the clothes again with a firm determination not to be easily led away.

No, we are right ; the more we looked, the more we were convinced of the accuracy of our previous impression. There was the man's whole life written as legibly on those clothes, as if he had his autobiography engrossed on parchment before us".

Thus there is a secondary life, which does not die with a man and tells his history after he is no more in a mute language, which requires the conjurer's art to interpret and of this art Dickens was a master.

No account of a Dickens's achievement can omit a reference to his indebtedness to the Seventeenth Century Writers of Character like Hall, Overbury, Earle and others. What they tell us about men and women in their brief sketches is often entertaining and testifies to a power of abstraction, which we can hardly underrate even when they fail to meet our demand for visualization. For the attributes are a bundle of qualities and are not embodied in a human being whom we can see or hear. This is also in many cases Dickens's own technique of presentation, of which "Sketches by Boz" offer numerous examples beside those to be found in the author's later work. I shall examine some of these as illustrating a mode, which does not seem to be favoured by writers of our time, not because the exploration is so complete as to leave no scope for later practitioners but because fashions in literature impose themselves upon the human imagination as powerfully as those in sartorial art. Perhaps some speculations may also be offered by way of explaining why Dickens oscillated between the concrete and the abstract style of presentation, often preferring the latter.

In "Sketches by Boz", CH. XI, we have an account of a Christening in which the uncle Mr Dumps is to officiate as god-father and make a speech. He did not readily accept the invitation as he deliberately avoided contact even with his closest relations. His character is described in the following terms: "He could hardly be said to hate anything in particular, because he disliked everything in general ; but perhaps his greatest antipathies were cabs, old women, doors that would not shut, musical amateurs, and omnibus cads". He played his role at the ceremony meeting several obstacles on his way, which seemed to suggest that the fates did not shape him to act the part of a god-father. Yet he kept his promise and came in time to be present at the function and fulfil his obligation as the child's god-father. He delivered his sentiments on the occasion of the ceremony and in doing so gave free expression to a sardonic element in his nature. 'I hope and trust, ladies and gentlemen', 'he said, ...that this young and now *apparently* healthy form may not be wasted by lingering disease...that he may live to be a comfort and blessing to his parents...But should he not be what we could wish—should he forget in after times the duty which he

owes to them—should they unhappily experience that distracting truth, “how sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child”...’. The family of Mr Kitterbell with this experience of christening decided to have nothing further to do with this uncle. They had other children later on and for the office of god-father two conditions were imposed: “He must bind himself, by a solemn obligation, not to make any speech after supper; and it is indispensable that he should be in no way connected with “the most miserable man in the world”.

The next reference will be to a section of “The Mudfog and Other Sketches”, entitled “Public Life of Mr Tulrumble”. He was a well-known coal-dealer and when the Mayor Sniggs died he was appointed in his place. During the six weeks he held office, he cancelled licence to ‘Jolly Boatmen’ which had a kitchen, a bar and tap-room and offered entertainment to hundreds of people. The new Mayor looked askance at the organization believing it to be a source of crime and immorality. But he soon found that he himself could not do without cakes and ale. He made peace with this merry public by ordering the very largest-sized bowl of hot punch, with an unlimited number of pipes. For he had also prohibited music and dancing. A statement expressing the Mayor’s saner attitude ran: “It is to be hoped that this might act as reminder to the Tulrumbles of another sphere, that puffed-up conceit is not dignity, and that snarling at the little pleasures they were once glad to enjoy, because they would rather forget the times when they were of lower station, renders them objects of contempt and ridicule”.

This account makes the coal-dealer who became Mayor and resigned his office quite a living creature. The other tales leave the characters shadowy. I shall give below a list of a dozen sketches with their titles: a consideration of the author’s attitude will lead to an inference which we shall offer at the end:

The Young Couple. The Formal Couple. The Loving Couple. The Contradictory Couple. The Couple who dote on their children. The Cool Couple. The Egotistical Couple. The Couple who Coddle themselves. The Old Couple. The Plausible Couple. The Nice Little Couple.

It is noticeable that in the dozen sketches, the couples are all described as stupid, selfish or slothful. The only exception is the account about the old couple. The paragraph concluding the sketch runs: “The old couple sit side by side, and the old time seems like yesterday indeed. Looking back upon the path they have travelled, its dust and ashes disappear; the flowers that withered long ago, show brightly again upon its borders, and they grow young once more in the youth of those about them (their grandchildren)”.

In the "Sketches of Boz", we have a dozen sketches of young gentlemen. I shall cite the titles as in the above series and reserve the comments till the end : The Bashful Young Gentleman. The Out-and-Out Young Gentlemen. The Very Friendly Young Gentleman. The Military Young Gentleman. The Political Young Gentleman. The Domestic Young Gentleman. The Censorious Young Gentleman. The Funny Young Gentleman. The Theatrical Young Gentleman. The Poetical Young Gentleman. The "Throwing-Off" Young Gentleman. The Young Ladies' Young Gentleman.

Dickens at the time of writing these sketches was twenty four or twenty five years of age. It is surprising to see that he has not a single word of praise for anyone of this great variety of people. On the very friendly young gentleman he bestows ironical praise and about the military young gentleman he writes :

"We are at a loss to imagine how it has come to pass that military young gentlemen have obtained so much favour in the eyes of the young ladies of this kingdom".

He introduces professors and scientific people only to laugh at them. A literary lion does not fare much better at his hands. Whom then did he admire, who were the people to whom he gave his sympathy? The question would not be difficult to answer. For his novels do not lack sympathetic characters. Our inquiry will be to ascertain if we could bring them together under some recognizable label.

The 24 sketches to which we have drawn attention are studies which owe considerably to the Overburian tradition of the 17th century. The sardonic uncle also belongs to it. Modern psychology would have probed into his case and discovered the causes rooted in his experience, which explained his behaviour. But Dickens did not apparently care to brood over the problem. His object was clearly to write something amusing and for this purpose a completely surface view sufficed.

The evidence we have considered above shows that his sympathies were extremely limited. No class of people seemed to elicit from him a word of appreciation. The only people who moved him were those who suffered hardship and privation in spite of honesty and diligent work. This is, however, a narrow world to write about and few could have made much out of it in absence of talents and abilities such as Dickens possessed. For him the suffering often appeared as a conflict between good and evil and one could view his Quilps and Uriah Heeps as myths representing a certain human situation, which led to suffering of an undeserved nature. The embodiment of suffering in terms of myths, which introduce us to human wisdom of permanent value is no mean achievement. As long as

men suffer and are unhappy Dickens will have a lasting appeal for readers. But it will be a mistake to take this aspect of his work as possessing the greatest significance. There is another and far more entertaining one in which we see original and eccentric people of a benevolent disposition, facing all sorts of difficulties, and often provoking a laughter of amusement. He seems also to write about children with genuine sympathy. But here Dickens is liable to be sentimental. For he seems to be carried away by his feeling, and produces an exaggerated picture, which appears hardly credible.

DICKENS AND HIS MODERN READERS

POPPY AIYYAR

EVERY age sees what it wants to see in a great writer. As T. S. Eliot points out in *Selected Essays*, even in the case of Shakespeare, the twentieth century has unearthed a fatigued Shakespeare, a messianic Shakespeare and a socialist Shakespeare. Dickens has also had his share of the vagaries of changing tastes and predilections. Victorian opinion of the writer veered between love for Dickens as a respectable comforter of the middle classes and admiration for the belligerent social critic who flayed the evils of an industrial society. George Gissing in fact was reluctant to admit that Dickens' later novels had any bitterness in them. He considered even the fog in *Bleak House* to be "rather cheerful than otherwise. George Bernard Shaw on the other hand, considered Dickens as one of the world's greatest writers, because he was the castigator of an industrialised society with its bourgeois values. Today, after two world wars (and of course Mr. Eliot's *Wasteland*!), the image of a cheerful bustling entertainer who indulges in social criticism by fits and starts is no longer appealing. If Dickens has to be meaningful to us, it is because of his deep world. Vision, the vision of a writer who is not sure of the meaning of this irrational life, a writer who is sometimes uncomfortably aware that human beings are at best merely bungling through a muddle.

Dickens' world, especially the world of his later novels, has something dark and sinister about it, a world which is perilously near that of Kafka or Swift. Even, his early novels have Sombre anticipations of the dark novels of the 1850s. But in the novels between 1850 and 1870, the tone changes to something of gloom and even despair. Mr. Bumble in *Oliver Twist* could dismiss the law as an ass or an idiot, but in *Bleak House*, the law's delay drives innocent people to madness or death. In the earlier novels, there is at least a sharp demarcation between good and evil. Mr. Murdstone, for example, is comprehensible in his evil. But in later novels like *Edwin Drood*, there is no active condemnation of an individual like the Deputy. It is a naturalistic presentation of a world which is dark. There is a bitter acknowledgment of the inexplicable character of life. What we get is incidents, characters. But there is no sense of causation. It is this increasing preoccupation with the meaning of life that brings

Dickens very near our own times. In other words it gives universality to his themes as in the case of a Dante or a Shakespeare or a Dostoevsky. The dust-heap in *Our Mutual Friend*, the marsh in *Great Expectations* and the fog in *Bleak House* are symbols of the human condition. The court of Chancery in *Bleak House* and the Circumlocution Office in *Little Dorrit* have the same nightmarish quality of reality as Kafka's vision of an intricate bureaucracy under the Austro-Hungarian empire.

But while recognising this "modern" tone of Dickens, we should not get carried away into forgetting that. Dickens was in the main stream of the Victorian novel. He is not another Virginia Woolfe or a Camus. There is no systematic attempt on the part of Dickens to present the world as it appears to the consciousness of a single focal awareness like that of Mrs. Dalloway or Roquentin in Sartre's *Nausea*. Dickens' attempt is to delineate a world where characters fail to interact on one another. The whole situation is presented deliberately from a detached third-person stand-point, the third person being the novelist himself. Even in *Bleak House*, the novel does not really take place as a byproduct of Esther's consciousness although the narrative is interspersed with large chunks of apparent autobiography. Esther at points becomes Dickens himself. For example it is Dickens and not she who describes Mr. Vholes' "dead glove" and his long thin shadow "chilling the seed in the ground as it glided along".

Dickens gives us a world, a plethora of experiences, not a single individual's consciousness. He is not trying to portray a single individual on the verge of nausea at the sight of a pebble on the beach, a single individual not being able to feel anything at his mother's funeral. On the other hand, what Dickens does show is a fundamental breakdown in terms of human communication. He presents a world where the individual moves in his own semi-autonomous world with his own appropriate catchword. Bagstock in *Dombey and Son* is a paradigm of the military colonel and all his gestures and actions tend to proclaim this fact Mr. Micawber always waiting for something to turn up, Mr. Toots who is always amiable and vacuous, Mr. Boythorn with his perennial emphasis on "abandoned ruffians", Gradgrind and his adherence to "facts, facts, facts," are all people who move in a world all their own with no attempt to communicate. In fact, the terrifying part is that the need to communicate does not present itself as a serious problem to these characters. In Camus for example, the Outsider can sense his inability to make the Judge or the mourners understand him. But in the world of Dickens, there is not even an awareness of incommunicability. While the anti-hero of the modern novel creates the world from an awareness of his own conscious-

ness, and this schizophrenic world see-saws with the world as it appears to others, in Dickens the illusions last forever. For example if Mrs Jellyby has been disappointed in Borrioboola-Gha, she merely switches over her energy and time to fight for the rights of women to sit in Parliament, a mission involving more Correspondence than the old one" ! There is no conflict between the character's own subjective projections and an uncomfortably obtrusive reality. This is perhaps the reason why Dickens seems cosy and happy to many readers. Each character seems to be encapsulated in his own world and therefore *seems* to be quite content, rather like the characters in the Drama of the Absurd. But the total picture that emerges is terrifying, people talking at cross-purposes with no attempt at connection.

What we have said so far may be exemplified by an analysis of *Bleak House*. "Fog every where; fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows ... the Lord Chancellor with a foggy glory round his head", is how the novel begins. A round the Court of Chancery is ranged a number of characters, all of whom wait in hope for a favourable verdict. These characters live in their own weird world. Miss Flite lives in her own world of frustrations, her universe being encompassed by Jarndyce and Jarndyce. To Mrs. Jellyby, the natives of Borrioboola-Gha constitute the only interest in life. She is always "as usual, very busy, but that you will excuse. The African project at present employs my whole time." The other professional Philanthropist, Mrs. Pardiggle, is a "formidable lady with spectacles, a prominent nose and a loud voice," forever trying to convert people, including her own unhappy children, to the cause of the Tockahoopo Indians. She lives forever in the world of Committees and charity-trusts. Mr. Bayhem Badger takes eternal pride in the eminent status of his wife's ex-husbands. Mr. Tulkinghorn, the lawyer, "a great reservoir of confidences", speechlessly at home in the houses of the great ones of the earth "remains an oyster of the old School, whom nobody can open." Lady Dedlock's apparently sparkling world is a deadened world, and she is always "bored to death." Sir Lircester, her husband "conceives it as utterly impossible that anything can be wanting in any direction, by anyone who has had the good fortune to be received under his roof; and in a state of sublime satisfaction, he moves among the company, a magnificent refrigerator." And "when he has nothing else to do he can always contemplate his own greatness. It is a considerable advantage to a man to have so inexhaustible a subject." Mr. Guppy, Mr. Skimpole, Mr. Turvey drop, that model of Deportment, are all two dimensional in their excessive preoccupation with their own thought-patterns. Esther, clinking her keys, tries to find a kind of harmony in this disjointed world. But even she has to

constantly remind herself that she is Dame Durden and generate a common sense attitude in order to find coherent streaks in this chaos. Mr. Jarndyce is not another Cheeryble brother. He is a disillusioned philanthropist and has recourse to constant allusions to "a bitter East Wind" which requires several hours in his "growlery" to pass off! This illogical Juxta-position of universes would have no real connections with one another except in the sense that the webs woven by fellow participants would constitute Symbols of varying importance in one's own fantasy. Events do impinge on these private worlds. But the tenor of the novel is solipsistic, since every character assumes that the others are adjuncts to his own dominant mode of consciousness. The fog epitomises the nebulousness of the world external to any given character's standpoint.

What I have been saying so far might tend to convey the misleading impression that Dickens was the gloomy precursor of certain trends in contemporary Literature. Obviously no assessment of Dickens can be complete without reference to his wit which affords an insight into the pathetic egregiousness of a pretentious "human predicament". In the ultimate analysis, the greatness of Dickens is not contingent upon any single interpretation. In this Centenary year, it is perhaps fitting to emphasise Dickens' depth and universality which are susceptible of a variegated number of critical constructions. The perspective which I have offered estimates the relevance of Dickens to his modern critics. Despite the fact that Dickens would have regarded his dissector's assiduous efforts with something very like a twinkle in his eye, the shifts in critical consciousness are indicative of the perennial qualities of Dickens' work.

DICKENS : SOME RECENT APPROACHES

KRISHNA GHOSH

I

THE popularity of Dickens the storyteller has perhaps never yet been seriously questioned ; the critical evaluation of Dickens the literary artist or Dickens the social thinker is comparatively recent. This is not to imply that the art of Dickens had not engaged the minds of important critics and writers of his own time. But the picture that emerges from Victorian criticism is overwhelmingly that of the jolly Dickens of Trollope, Swinburne and Chesterton—a benign Santa Claus figure whose exuberant humour was set off by pathos and by suitably nerve-tingling displays of the grotesque—a compound of Pickwick, Micawber and Fagin and Little Nell and the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters. Literary judgment tended to confine itself to the vaguely laudatory tones that one reserves for a national institution—"The Art of Mr. Dickens, although elaborate and great seems only a happy modification of Nature".¹ At the other end of the scale (though admittedly somewhat later in the century) one has critics like Meredith and Henry James who found the humour gross, the pathos maudlin and the characterization and plot construction clumsy and infantile ; there is a condemnation implicit in James's remark that Dickens could be called "the greatest of superficial novelists." One occasionally comes across an attempt to strike a mean between these two extremes. Declaring *Hard Times* to be the best of the novels, Ruskin observed, "The essential value and truth of Dickens's writings have been unwisely lost sight of by many thoughtful persons merely because he presents his truth with some colour of caricature".² Gissing focused on Dickens the realist and satirist and sought to analyse the techniques by which the novelist achieved his purpose ("the judicious use of emphasis and re-iteration"). One common factor, however, united all these approaches (with the possible exception of Ruskin's), and that is the emphasis laid on the earlier novels at the expense of the later, more sombre ones. Tom-all-alone's and its like consorted ill with the dominant image of Christmas cheer, and were either glossed over or ignored or dismissed as the creations of a flagging imagination. ³

Viewed in this perspective twentieth-century Dickens criticism presents a very different picture. The modern contribution lies not only in a more

serious study of Dickens the social commentator but also in the perception of the complexity of Dickens's art as it matured and developed through the successive novels. It lies, too, in the radical discovery of a macabre, tormented, subversive Dickens—one whose outward gaiety masked an impatience with Victorian values and an awareness of moral issues, and who anticipated Dostoevsky and Kafka in his exploration of certain areas of experience through a series of recurring symbols. As it may be imagined, these new approaches entail a shift of emphasis away from the early novels to a close analysis of the psychology and symbolism of the later works.

II

When Edmund Wilson declared in 1939 that "it is difficult for British pundits to see in him (Dickens) the great artist and social critic that he was", one long phase in Dickens scholarship was practically over. Wilson's *The Two Scrooges* along with George Orwell's *Charles Dickens* (1940) were the two essays that were primarily responsible for transforming the traditional picture of Dickens and setting in motion a revival of serious critical interest in his work. Some of their approaches had been anticipated earlier, most notably in Shaw's reference to the later novels as "masterpieces" in his Introduction to *Hard Times* (1912). But, as Wilson declared, "we may find in Dickens's work today a complexity and depth to which even Gissing and Shaw have hardly...done justice—an intellectual and artistic interest which makes Dickens loom very large in the whole perspective of the literature of the West." Orwell would perhaps not go so far. Yet, despite some signs of special pleading, Wilson's essay is definitely the more dramatic of the two in the brilliant case he makes for Dickens as Dostoevsky's master rather than a classic of the nursery.

Wilson's point of departure lies in the somewhat startling observation : "Of all the great Victorian writers he (Dickens) was probably the most antagonistic to the Victorian age itself." This Dickens is at bottom an uncomfortable and subversive rebel whose unfortunate childhood experiences, unhappy marriage, and sense of social and personal insecurity (as exemplified in the Ellen Ternan episode) had bred a subconscious hostility to the age which lionised him. One notes this in his social and political criticism, specially in his indictment against "the self-important and moralizing middle class". Wilson, however, does not make as much of this as does Orwell. As he pertinently observes, Dickens was fascinated more by oddities of character and situation than by abstract theory : his strength lies not in his ideas (which were very often muddled) but in his highly individualized portraits of the Gradgrinds and Foodles and M'Choakumchilds who formed the reality behind the system.

The real interest of *The Two Scrooges* lies in the application of psychological analysis to the study of Dickens's "rapid development as an artist". Wilson sees him as "the victim of a maniac—depressive cycle", expressing himself through fantasies of crime, madness and violence; the reader is made aware, especially in the later novels, of a savage bitterness that absolves them of the familiar charge of lurid exaggeration. Great importance is attached to the thematic significance of Dickens's symbols—in his use of the fog in *Bleak House*, the railway locomotive in *Dombey*, the uncovered coal pit of *Hard Times*, the dust pile and the rotting river of *Our Mutual Friend*, he is felt to anticipate Kafka, Mann and Joyce. The commonplace concerning the "flatness" of Dickens's characters comes equally under attack. Wilson admits that "Dickens's difficulty.. is to get good and bad together in one character" Nevertheless Eugene Wrayburn Bradley Headstone and John Jasper reveal a decided complexity of motive that indicates "the deep entanglement and conflict of the bad and good in one man". Finally, Wilson comments on Dickens's experiments with form. It was the novelist's achievement "to create a new tradition," to invent "a new literary genre"—what Wilson calls "the novel of the social group".

One may not accept all of Wilson's conclusions, yet his revaluation of Dickens undoubtedly called in question the validity of the existing critical platitudes. Orwell, too, sees Dickens as "a subversive writer, a radical...a rebel", who "attacked English institutions with a ferocity that has never since been approached". However, Dickens's social thinking is felt to be lacking in substance, since it was "almost exclusively moral". Orwell traces this to the peti-bourgeois prejudices of Dickens's middle class upbringing—he was aware of the contemporary social *malaise* but not of the need for a fundamental social change. Indeed, he had no conception at all of an alternative system nor had he any real sense of emotional involvement with the working classes. "His...sympathies are bounded by Mr. Pickwick on the upper side and Mr. Barkis on the lower". Ultimately it is not this unconvincing "bourgeois morality", but an almost Gothic fertility of invention that makes up for the limitations in Dickens' technique and vision—his books are full of "rotten architecture but wonderful gargoyles". Orwell is, in a sense, closer to Chesterton than to Wilson in his emphasis on Dickens' humour and sentiment, in his preference for *Pickwick* and in his dismissal of Meagles, Jarndyce and Betsy Trotwood in the same breath. But one gets in Orwell one aspect of Dickens that one misses in Wilson's scholarly and perceptive study—the sense of an exhilarating, inexhaustible vitality of comic creation that will always remain a part of Dickens' appeal.

III

Orwell's, and especially Wilson's, essays may be regarded as seminal not merely in their indication of new lines of approach, but also in their changing of the traditional picture of the middlebrow novelist within his "circle of stage fire" spinning out interminable tales to the formula of "make 'em laugh, make 'em weep, make 'em wait", Dickens, in fact, is shown to be relevant to the post-Marx post-Freud mentality as well as to the analytic tendencies of present-day criticism.

What, then, are the main kinds of current criticism? One might perhaps begin with the "biographical" studies (using the word in its widest sense). Happily, this no longer takes the form of crude assertions that Dickens "is" the son of Micawber-Dorrit and Mrs. Nickleby, who lodged with Mrs. Pipchin and fell in love with Dora who turned into Flora. Modern critics are certainly aware of the connection between the vast world of the novels and the novelist's life. But their emphasis lies, on the one hand, on Dickens' relationship to a particular social and historical milieu and, on the other, on his use of recurring personal motifs (the seriocomic father figure, the exploited child, the prison and so on) in the exploration of moral issues.

Bernard Shaw once declared that *Little Dorrit* had made a socialist out of him and most of the recent sociological criticism of Dickens is foreshadowed in his observation that the later novels embody "a passionate revolt against the whole industrial order of the modern world." That Dickens was sensitive to the pressures generated by the Industrial Revolution and the Poor Laws is evident in his crusade against Bumbledom in all its forms—the workhouse and Court of Chancery, the laissez-faire economics of *Hard Times*, the sham philanthropy of the Pardiggles and Jellybys, the genteel exploitation of the Merdles and Veneerings. And there is an attempt to build up an evaluated social world through the contrasting of social types within a single novel—Jo, Rouncewell and the moneyed Dedlocks in *Bleak House*, for instance. The authoritative analysis of the social basis of the novels is still perhaps Humphry House's *The Dickens World* (1941). House is concerned to show their value as "historical documents", even though he cannot quite absolve the novelist of a certain amount of Podsnappery in his minimizing of the brutality and squalor of London slum life. Dickens' attitudes are related to Victorian political economy, the Oxford movement and the prevailing legal and educational systems, and the basically realistic nature of his imagination is underlined. But the shortcoming of this variety of historical criticism is amply demonstrated in the conclusion that Dickens was "a journalist more than a creative artist." At the other extreme, one has T. A.

Jackson's Marxist interpretation in *Charles Dickens : The Progress of a Radical* (1937) ; the reader is left to accommodate this picture of a fierce protector of the proletariat with the genteel snobbery of David & Pip, or the distrust of the mob manifested in *Barnaby Rudge* and *A Tale of Two Cities*.

In the fifties, Jack Lindsay's *Charles Dickens* (1950) and Edgar Johnson's *Charles Dickens : His Tragedy and Triumph* (1952) achieved a more balanced appreciation from the sociological standpoint without distorting the crowded life of the novels. Both these biographical studies concentrate on Dickens' inner development. Johnson sees Dickens' genial humanity gaining in depth and validity through a considered criticism of the basic assumptions of industrialism—the "Cash Nexus and the concept of the economic man. Lindsay traces the growth of anti-establishment opinion, remarking—"Even Balzac, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy cannot show such an orderly progression of penetrating definitions illuminating the fate of man under capitalism". Dickens' "socialism" is however evaluated in terms of art. Through a blend of fantasy sentiment and realism, he is felt to have succeeded in evoking a profound sense of the dissociation and alienation of an industrialized society. Finally, one has Arnold Kettle's attempt to resolve the troublesome opposition between Dickens' radicalism and conservatism through an investigation of the contrapuntal, and often contradictory, working of "plot" and "pattern" in the novels. ⁴

Biographical criticism shades of, in another direction, into studies of psychology and symbolism—the critical emphasis being, of course, on the "dark" Dickens of the later novels. One ought incidentally to bear in mind that the sociological and symbolical approaches are not, properly speaking, mutually exclusive ; both Lindsay and Johnson have spoken of the emblematic use of character and setting. Nevertheless, discussions purely on the level of psychology and imagery have not only revealed the brooding, ironic depths in Dickens. They have shown him to be strikingly "modern" in his likeness to certain major modern writers, as also in his exploration of what Saul Bellow called "the craters of the spirit". Thus J. Hillis Miller considers the search for identity (a contemporary theme) to be the central problem of *Martin Chuzzlewit*.⁵ And A. E. Dyson, in his introductory essay to *Modern Judgement on Dickens* (1968) regards Dickens' use of "an undercurrent of symbolism adding resonance to the plot" to be "the most important single innovation in the novel's modern history" and a decisive influence on writers from Kafka to Scott Fitzgerald.

Now, it is well known that *Amerika* is Kafka's "Dickens" novel, and Stavregin and Raskolnikov may be compared to Steerforth and Jonas

Chuzzlewit as studies in criminal psychology. In the nineteen forties, Rex Warner and Edward Sackville-West had compared Dickens to Dostoevsky and Kafka. More recently, Mark Spilka in *Dickens and Kafka* (1959) analyses the symbols and attitudes common to both writers, as in *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit* and *The Trial*, or *David Copperfield* and *The Metamorphosis*. To take another aspect, Monroe Engel in *The Maturity of Dickens* (1967) traces the organising principle of the novels to an underlying unity of tone achieved through the use of dominant image clusters (what he calls "multiple construction") rather than through a unity of incident. Other notable studies of imagery include essays by Dorothy Van Ghent on *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *Great Expectations* and Robert Morse on *Our Mutual Friend*; there is also Lionel Trilling's notable introductory essay to *Little Dorrit* (1953) where Dickens is felt to anticipate the Freudian theory of neurosis in his handling of the "prison" symbol.

From studies of imagery it is but a short step to investigations conducted along the lines of "new criticism." As may be expected, this method has some inbuilt hazards when applied to the sprawling and amorphous structure of Dickens' novels. Hillis Miller, for instance, makes interesting comparisons between Dickens and Baudelaire and likens Dickens' episodic style to Dos Passos and Faulkner. But his close verbal analysis is at times too subtle to capture the full flavour of Dickens' novels.

IV

F. R. Leavis, as is well known, placed Dickens very firmly outside of his "Great Tradition" for being a mere "entertainer", and his attitude is shared to some extent by Mario Praz. In the light of recent Dickens scholarship, however, this would definitely appear to be the opinion of a minority. The general consensus is on the side of Dickens the mature artist who can be read at many levels and who is Shakespearean in the range and humanity of his vision.

And yet, modern Dickens criticism poses certain inescapable problems—which Dickens is the critic talking about? Orwell had remarked that Dickens was "well worth stealing" but are not the Marxist Dickens, the journalistic Dickens, the Freudian Dickens and the Baudelairean Dickens contradictory, if not mutually exclusive? More important, granted that all these approaches enrich our response through the fresh insights that they offer, can any one of them be said to have captioned the totality of Dickens? Or should we say of Dickens criticism of the last thirty years what Douglas Bush said of Keats criticism—that it is difficult to say something that is "both new and true"?

Now it is undoubtedly a measure of an author's greatness that he should remain relevant to all ages. The tendency today is, however, to interpret Dickens almost exclusively from the standpoint of the modern sensibility—to make his novels reflect the pressures, perplexities and preoccupations of the twentieth century at the expense of their undeniable Victorian qualities. This is so even in the case of some historical critics whose particular task it is to restore the original vision of the artist by recreating his social background. "New criticism", with its emphasis on the work of art as an autonomous structure, naturally avoids this pitfall. But Dickens' work is very closely bound up with his life, and it would be an unnecessarily partial reading of, say, *David Copperfield* if one were to leave the character of John Dickens and the Blacking Factory trauma out of consideration.

Symbolic criticism appears at present to be the leading line of approach. Whether or not Dickens like Joyce or Baudelaire, was deliberate in his use of dominating symbols and image clusters is, of course, a matter of opinion. The symbolic critics have revealed the dense and intricate texture and the complex moral vision of the later novels; they have also argued convincingly for the application of criteria of unity to Dickens' novels different from those of, say, James. Their interpretations centre around the value terms of modern criticism—tension, complexity, irony, inclusiveness and so on. Unfortunately these terms are of little relevance to the earlier novels which, contrary to Victorian practice, are now consistently ignored as a group. (In fact, the only recent book on the early work that comes to mind is Steven Marcus' excellent study, *Dickens from Pickwick to Dombey* (1965). As Monroe Engel remarks—"It would be a greater challenge to current literary fashion to prescribe for the earlier fiction the kind of reading it deserves". Moreover, to value Dickens partly at least because he is "like" Kafka or Joyce or Proust (Graham Greene's view) or even Pinter (Dyson's view) is surely to do less than justice to the uniqueness of his vision. Finally, with its emphasis on the sardonic humour, the gloom and guilt of Dickens, symbolic criticism has little to say of Dickens' enduring comic sense of life.

Ultimately, what one misses in all these approaches is the sense of the Dickensian gusto. And the average reader still balks at any reading of Dickens that relegates Micawber to a footnote—or Samweller, or Mrs. Gamp, for that matter. Nevertheless, it may certainly be said of modern criticism that it shows a far deeper appreciation of Dickens' "infinite variety" than ever before.

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2. Ruskin, *Unto This Last*.
3. Cf. Henry James's review of *Our Mutual Friend* (*Views & Reviews*, Boston, 1908) : *Bleak House* was forced ; *Little Dorrit* was laboured ; The present work is dug out as with a spade and pickaxe (Reprinted in *The Dickens Critics*, ed. Ford & Lane).
4. Cf. The analysis of *Oliver Twist* in *An Introduction to The English Novel*, vol. i, pp 133—151.
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DICKENS'S TREATMENT OF CHILD- PSYCHOLOGY—AND DAVID COPPERFIELD

NARAYAN SAHA

WE talk so often of Dickens's humour, Dickens's characterisation, Dickens's flair for caricature and exaggeration, even Dickens's portrayal of contemporary events and manners that we tend to forget Dickens was no less an artist in his delineation of the child-mind, in his insight into the visions and fears, loves and hates, anger and pride, simplicity and innocence of a little child. At a time when he was producing in hectic haste voluminous novels on demand from the press and the public, when he was rising in fame and gaining in wealth on account of his lectures and 'sketches', he had but little scope for that concentration which is essential for the psychological treatment of any soul. Dickens obviously knew this. That is why, he laid the greatest stress on conversation between characters which automatically revealed their inner essence. Sir Walter Scott, that prince of historical novelists, also solved a similar problem in a similar way. In an ironically imaginary dialogue between a painter and the author himself at the beginning of the "Bride of Lammermoor" where the painter complains: "your characters patter too much; there is nothing in whole pages but mere chat and dialogue", the author replies: "The ancient philosopher was wont to say 'speak that I may know thee'."

So in the matter of the treatment of child-psychology, Dickens's process is never those of the modern stream-of-consciousness novelists like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce; he never took Freud and Jung as his models, nor Jung and Freud as his guides. Indeed, when Dickens wrote, these avowed masters of psychology had not yet seen the light of day. Dickens's process, from the very outset, is far more difficult than theirs, for with him the story must come first, psychology afterwards. And yet, they are to be intermingled. Here is the crux. Narration of events after events in a well-designed plot is easy. But the very moment a novelist steps aside and attempts to pry into the mind of his character, he runs the risk of losing our interest in, and sympathy for his work.

But infinitely difficult is the job of depicting the child's mind by a man who has left his days of childhood, that stage of blessed innocence, far behind, for in this case, the man must think and feel and dream like a

child ; otherwise, whatever he will say will sound as strange and artificial as the sound of a modern vehicle would do in an Anglo-Saxon locality. Perhaps that is why, in the whole range of English Literature, we rarely find a flawless treatment of child-psychology. Innocence and simplicity of childhood on the one hand, wisdom and profundity of old age on the other, seldom co-exist. Shakespeare was a great psychologist in the non-technical sense of the term ; he knew the minds of a monarch and a menial, of a soldier and a shipman, of a clown and a coquette, of a serious jew or a shrewd jester ; but he was not much of a specialist in child-psychology. Wordsworth tried to speak of childhood, like a child in his "Ode to Immortality" but he failed, for he could not forget his own 'shadow' and projected his own mind to that of his subject. Only Blake came anywhere near success in looking into the child's heart, and in his "Songs of Innocence" when he deals with shepherds and lambs and a little boy lost, wisdom speaks with the voice of a child. But after all, he was a poet and hence had little scope for an elaborate treatment of child-psychology. Only Richardson and Sterne in their novels of the 18th century, tried to look, before Dickens, at the 'theatre of the soul' of their characters, but even they cannot match Dickens, for their stories mark the psychology of adulthood. Dickens succeeded in his sphere of child-psychology because perhaps in creating the 'children' of his fancy, he lived over again his own days of childhood. David and Oliver and Smike (in Nicholas Nickleby)—all are prototypes of little Dickens.

David Copperfield's character as a child is most poignantly true because he is the most affectionate child of his creator. "It will be easily believed", Dickens declares, "that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy and that no one can ever love that family as dearly as I love them. But like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts, a favourite child—and his name is David Copperfield."

David's recital of all that he had to pass through, the uglier aspects of his early stage of life, read like an authentic story. They seem so real, so pity-provoking, because his sufferings are so undeserved. To a child, when his father is dead and gone, his mother is the nearest being whom he can trust and love. Then his mother is *his*, he will brook no rival, not to speak of a second 'father'. And yet, one Mr. Murdstone steps on the scene, a self-styled father who calls Mrs. Copperfield by her pet name, touches her in David's presence. David's heart aches, what he can't stop, he must endure ; and he endures even though it requires patience and stoicism of a mature man.

A child understands little ; but he has an instinctive sense to know love from hate. With his mother, helplessly moving away from him,

David looked in hectic haste for one who would love and remember and understand him. Emily was such a one and therefore David had a sharp sense of pain at his separation from her.

Home was for him a nest of peace and his mother, the sole comforter. How he suffered in silent grief when he found that his mother, the most dear and affectionate being, was governed by one whom he hated most ! He had none to whom he could open his mind, but walls, windows and his bed. So when his mother came once upstairs in search of him, her single touch drew down from the child's eyes a flood of tears,—tears not of wrath, not even of remorse, but of mute complaints and wounded pride.

If the child knows the agent of love, he knows also the agent of fear. Mr. Murdstone, the hard hearted, intrusive "father" of little David was so cruel, and so exacting in his demands and positive in his orders that the child felt it was better to be obedient than be adamant. That is why, at his command, he cleaned his face from the wash-basin as willingly as a hateful dog.

Dog ? Yes, that is what he felt himself once at a later date. Murdstone discovered a tendency in little Davy for sullenness and abstinence from a particular room and he thundered : "I will have a respectful, prompt and ready bearing towards myself, towards Jane Murdstone and towards your mother. I will not have this room shunned as if it were infected, at the pleasure of a child. Sit down." And what was David's reaction ?—"He ordered me like a dog and I obeyed like a dog." It reads like the record of an incident burnt into the lad's consciousness. It is not a vision or a waking dream. Fled are those days but their memory remained.

These records of the personal experiences, the painful reminiscence of the past life achieves an added poignancy from the fact that Dickens, the 'artist', through the lips of David, remembered and re-lived the past. His own griefs and disasters of boyhood, his own sufferings and setbacks, sorrows and pains, hopes shattered and loves ruined—he made David speak out ; that is why, the expressions are so appealing. Dickens told the boy's story as a boy would tell it. "A boy would remember every brutal syllable in every brutal sentence ; he would remember it to his dying day. In nothing is, Dickens more palpably true than in the exactness with which he reproduces the intense sensitivity of childhood".

OF GASTRONOMICAL HUMOUR IN DICKENS AND IN OTHERS

K. LAHIRI

ONE of the chief and fondly cherished subjects from which Dickens's humour germinates is food. Many of his most unforgettable humorous incidents and dialogues occur at meal times. He not only relishes, as every healthy animal does, the anticipation of a good dinner, but enjoys imaginatively full gastronomical pleasure through visualizing an effusion of details of an elaborate menu. To Dickens the very description of food is funny, as of course it is.

Usually Dickens secures humorous effect by his leisurely cataloguing of an enormous quantity and a large variety of eatables. And this enumeration is supported by a patient writing up of the meticulous ritual of the preparation of food. And lastly to crown it all comes the culmination of the whole operation in the serving of the successive items of food with the pleasing show and sound of the crockery and the twinkle and glare in the looks of the waiters in anticipation of appreciation, followed finally by the consuming, the picture of actual eating, including the most careful handling, ceremonious carving, punctuated by the mouth-watering and munching and sucking and licking with the gusts of a Sir Epicure.

Here is an affectionate account of the cooking and eating of a goose in *The Christmas Carol*. The perfectly coordinated participation of several people in the preparation presumes a seriousness that is simply amusing :

"Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot ; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour ; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple sauce ; Martha dusted the hot plates."

The description that follows, of serving the food, and particularly of the ceremonious slicing of the goose meat, has a mock heroic tone in reflecting the suspense and admiration of the assembled party :

"At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast ; but when she did, and when the long-expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board."

And then the preparation of the pudding, steaming and smelling, and its presentation with full formality, have a grandeur of its own, soaked in suppressed humour :

"Hullo ! A great deal of steam ! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing day ! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastry cook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that ! That was the pudding ! In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered—flushed, but smiling proudly—with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top."

The course of meat and pudding is crowned by a rich mixture of tasty ingredients and a heap of fruits to boot :

"And then there was the compound in the jug, tasted and considered perfect, apples and oranges on the table, and a shovel full of chestnuts on the fire."

With such a load on board, Bob Cratchit can exclaim from a full heart, "A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us all !"

There is a parallel picture of a hearty meal in *Bleak House*. Dickens employs there, as in *The Christmas Carol*, the same technique of elaboration and profusion of details. The description, however, is pitched here in a different key. Whereas in *The Christmas Carol* he relishes leisurely amplification, in *Bleak House* he seems to enjoy speed and agility all around. Mr. Guppy gives the dinner to the hungry Jobling and young Smallweed, a limb of the law, at the Slap-Bang dining house.

The whole process of ordering and serving the meal is a scene full of enthusiasm. They order veal and ham and French beans—quite conscious of the minutest details :

"and don't you forget the stuffing, Polly"—
with three pint pots of half-and-half.

Then follows a picture of lively activity from kitchen to table, of cooks and servers and eaters :

"Quickly the waitress returns, bearing what is apparently a model of the Tower of Babel, but what is really a pile of plates and flat tin dish-covers. ... Then, amid a constant coming in, and going out, and running about, and a clatter of crockery, and a rumbling up and down of the machine which brings the nice cuts from the kitchen, and a shrill crying for a more nice cuts down the speaking pipe, and a shrill reckoning of the cost of nice cuts that have been disposed of, and a general flush and steam of hot joints, cut and uncut, and a considerable heated atmosphere in which the soiled knives and table cloths seem to break out spontaneously

into eruptions of grease and blotches of beer, the legal triumvirates appease their appetites."

The repetition and variation of the courses are done with appreciable relish :

"Mr. Jobling has a second go of veal and ham with a summer cabbage, and plies his knife and fork with a relishing steadiness. For pastry, they decide on marrow puddings, and to these succeed 'Three Cheshires' and to these 'three small rums'."

The eater's gusto trips the formality of invoking divine grace and bubbles with vulgar platitudes :

"Mr. Jobling does not invoke God's blessing on the company, but he philosophises : 'What am I to do ? How am I to live ? *Il fo manger*, you know', says he, pronouncing that word as if he meant a necessary fixture in an English stable. '*Il fo manger*. That's the French saying, and managing is as necessary to me as it is to a Frenchman. Or more so'."

Even a comparatively routine meal with its simplicity and ordinariness possesses a halo of grandeur and enthusiasm about it. The meal served to Mr. Clenman in *Little Dorrit* is not associated with any special occasion or ceremony. It is just a daily programme. This is no high dinner with a long-drawn menu, richly prepared and gaudily served. Still the whole affair seems to have a dignity worthy of the Patriarchal household. The simple food is well-cooked to promote quiet digestion and the service is neatly done.

It begins with some soup, some fried soles, a butter boat of shrimp sauce, and a dish of potatoes. Then it continues with mutton, a steak and an apple-pie. What is lacking in variety appears to be compensated by quantity and sincerity. The last of the Patriarchs has always been a mighty eater. With perfect ease and naivety he disposes of an enormous quantity of solid food with "the benignity of a good soul, who is feeding someoneelse." Mr. Clenman enjoys all through. He is visibly delighted.

Elaboration, which is the forte of Dickens's style, adds zest to his gastronomical humour. 'The outstanding, unmistakable mark of Dickens's writing,' observes George Orwell, 'is the unnecessary detail.' And this is never shown to better advantage than in the description of food.

In *Old Curiosity Shop* little Jacob eats oysters with elaborate ceremonies most punctiliously observed, as if it had been born and bred in the business and had been practising the rituals for many years in high social parties. With how much care and discretion, beyond his years, does he sprinkle the pepper and the vinegar ! But the most dignified and artistic part of the programme is executed when the eating is over. With what skill of hands and playful fancy does he build up with the leavings, the

shells, a magnificent grotto on the table! Any one can eat oysters, and with pepper and vinegar too. But only a Dickens child, with a Dickensian humour tending towards elaboration of a simple action, could build up a grotto with the shells.

Dickens's humour apropos of food is sought to be produced by his double approaches simultaneously from two directions. The first contributory factor is an elaboration in the description of food, and of its cooking and serving. This is remarkable not simply for variety of the menu but also for the sheer quantity of the supply of food. On the other side, humour results from the very relish and enthusiasm of the eater, the zest with which the food is consumed and enjoyed.

About Dickens's presentation of menus of food there is always something large, a sense of amplitude and abundance. In spite of their essential homeliness there is a touch of the rare and delicious, though the food is perfectly ordinary and commonplace in character. The Dickensian dinner table is simply irresistible. The author devotes so much labour and care to the delineation of food at every available opportunity—and opportunities do crop up here and there quite unexpectedly—that the most casual reader of Dickens's novels can sumptuously eat his way through the volumes, though in these hard days of scarcity and dearth such rich varieties and huge quantities of eatables would hardly be within the means of the average middle class household even in Dickens's homeland, not to speak of ours.

In the long history of human dietetics there have been ups and downs in the recognition and social position of certain items of food. In India half a century before tomatoes were looked down upon as an inferior kind of vegetable with no food value. They received no special attention of richer sections of society. Consumed primarily by poorer people, these used to be sold quite cheap and neglected as an ingredient in preparation of food. Later the value of its vitamin-contents being recognised, this once-slighted vegetable rose quickly to a high status in Indian dietetics. It is now considered a delicacy and a must in the culinary world, both as an essential part of cooked dishes and as an independent sauce or salad to be consumed raw.

In the same manner in the west there came a wide variation in the valuation of oysters in the social scale. A century ago, in Dickens's days, these formed the staple non-vegetarian food for the poorer folk in rural areas, where these were available in plenty. Later by the strange vagaries of aristocratic taste, sometimes reverting to the ways of the vulgar, which seem to acquire a fascination for the refined, this poor man's food came to be regarded as a delicacy at the table of the rich.

"It is a wery remarkable circumstance, Sir," says Sam Weller, "that poverty and oysters seem to go together." Thus a change in popular taste regarding food is exploited by Dickens as a source of joking humour.

To extract humour out of so common and universal a material as food Dickens hardly takes recourse to any unnatural situation or attitude. In his approach to food Dickens is altogether human and perfectly natural. He is never oversensuous in his descriptions; he scarcely stresses imaginative relish of specially cherished luxuries in food. The interest in food that his characters evince is not characteristic of a gourmet or glutton; it is just the elemental human Zest in food. And the inclination towards exhibitionism of sheer quantity of edibles is no more than a healthy child's avidity for and pleasure in an excess of food. And is not the sight of a child, demanding a lion's share of a particular course at the table—soup, fish, meat, sweets, cheese—which has taken its fancy, highly amusing?

Dickens's zest in food infects readers, one and all, irrespective of age, society, food habits and prejudices. An Indian reader, though not accustomed to European dishes, even having a natural liking for vegetarian diets, may still vicariously relish Dickens's display of eatables, simple or rich, but always hot and tasty. Dickens is non-pareil as a describer of food among imaginative writers, ancient and modern, western and oriental. And the secret of his uncommonness is in his sharing fully the perfectly common universal zest in eating.

It must be interesting to compare Dickens's treatment of food with those of other English writers, his predecessors, contemporaries, and successor. In the early tradition of English prose fiction Richardson and Fielding, Smolett and Sterne, Goldsmith and Scott, being preoccupied with sentimentality or didacticism, psychology or romance, did not indulge in descriptions and relish of food. Jane Austen has slight references to eatables, in her domestic scenes, as for instance, when Mrs. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* plans for her choicest dishes for her would-be son-in-law, Bingley, who disappoints her by unexpectedly leaving for the town. Lamb in one or two of his fanciful essays gives magnificent food scenes with a profusion of humour. But it is in some of the imaginative writers of the twentieth century, like Wodehouse, 'Saki', and Evelyn Waugh, that we come accross inviting comparisons and contrasts in this respect.

That Lamb took an essentially human relish in food is plainly borne out by his attempt to trace an almost religious ritual of Grace before Meat to the grossly animal joy of the primitive hunter starting a sumptuous meat-meal, which was not quite frequent :

"In the shouts and triumphal songs with which, after a season of sharp

abstinence, a lucky booty of deer's or goat's flesh would naturally be ushered home, existed, perhaps, the germ of the modern grace."

Effusive in his elaboration of a good repast, Lamb is at the same time deeply touched by his constitutional sympathy for the poor, who have to remain content with the simplest meal :

"The poor man's bread is his daily bread, literally his bread for the day. 'Their courses are perennial?' 'Their' stands for rich men, and 'perennial' means a constant supply of dainties including fish, flesh and fowls."

He gives this contrast a humorous twist by his mock-serious association of simplicity with religiosity. A plain diet, like a dish of mutton with turnips, least stimulative to appetite, leaves the mind free to indulge in grace, while a rich cate of venison or turtle will cause a perturbation of mind ill conducive to such sentiments. Lamb confesses that when he has

"Sate at rich men's tables, with the savoury soup and messes steaming up the nostrils, and moistening the lips of the guests with desire and a distracted choice,"

he has felt any ceremonious grace rather unseasonable.

Lamb even cites Milton for a banquet of surfeit such as Satan provides for a temptation in *Paradise Regained* :

"A table richly spread in regal mode
With dishes piled, and meats of noblest sort
And savour ; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
Gris-amber-steamed : all fish from sea or shore,
Freshet or purling brook, for which was drained
Pontus and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast."

'Gris-amber-steamed' means : Steamed with ambergris, on account of its agreeable perfume. And Lamb suspects that Milton was thinking not so much of old Roman luxury in food as of his own gaudy days at Cambridge.

Lamb's gastronomical humour reaches its height when he takes a man's taste in food as an index of his refinement. If a man, Quaker-like swallows unctuous morsels of deer's flesh, affecting not to know what he is eating, Lamb suspects his taste in higher matters. Lamb shrinks instinctively from one who professes to like minced veal. With as much conviction he believes that one refusing apple-dumplings can not have a pure mind, though he confesses that the vegetable tribe, generally speaking, have lost their gust with him. Hence the theory : there is a physiognomical character in the tastes for food. In matter of food Lamb

betrays a scrupulous taste and a sharp sensitiveness. If it is least spoilt in preparation, he is thrown out of temper :

"Butter ill melted—that commonest of kitchen failures—puts me beside my tenor."

Lamb is very particular about his preference of the Roast Pig of a tender age :

"Of all the delicacies in the whole *mündus edibilis*, I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniarum*. I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork—those hobbledchoys—but a young and tender suckling under a moon old."

How eloquent is Lamb's choice of epithets in his endeavour to communicate the rare relish of the crackling—its indefinable smell and taste, the very feel of it !—

"There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat ! but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure blood—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result or common substance."

The deliberate use of heavy Latin expression raises the pettiness to a ritualistic dignity.

And then the unforgettable picture of the little innocent in the process of being roasted in mild heat and in its ultimate position of quiet rest on the table ! The primitive cruelty of the rite thaws in the genial warmth of Elia's sympathy, which does not, however, lapse into Dickens's sentimental pity. Lamb's delicate treatment saves the description from being painfully uncanny. The mock-moralistic tone rather helps the passage pass into the realm of pure humour :

"Behold him while he is 'doing'—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string ! Now he is just done ! To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age ! he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—soothing stars. See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth !"

Through a magnificent contrast with pine-apple, Lamb triumphantly establishes the all round superiority of roast pig both in excellent flavour and in providing ample nourishment by satisfying appetite :

"He is the best of saporis (savours). Pine-apple is great, She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause—too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her—like lovers' kisses, she biteth—she is a pleasure bordering on man from the fierceness and insanity of her relish—but she stoppeth at the palate—she meddleth not with the appetite—and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton-chop".

The passage, an eloquent testimony as it is to Lamb's super-refinement in taste, is richly punched with humour provoked by the simile of the lovers.

And he has an equal concern for nutrition. Roast pig strengthens the strong and nourishes the weak :

"Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite then he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices. No part of him is better or worse than another."

Lamb's choice of sauce for the roast pig speaks of his delicate taste. A tender dish as the suckling roast is, it must not be spoilt by rich, hot spices :

"His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic ; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling—a flower."

The soft flavour of the roast cannot be improved by the course, pernicious, pungent smell of garlic.

Lamb is not a selfish grabber of food. What he likes he would share ungrudgingly with his friends and neighbours :

"Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens, capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispose as freely as I receive them."

But he stops as he comes to the pig, a blessing particularly adapted to his individual palate. He keeps its good flavour for himself.

Lamb has a taste for sweets too, particular for good hot cakes. He recollects with pleasure such snacks as his aunt used to give him in parting after a holiday in his boyhood :

"My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had

dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven".

After having given it away in charity to a beggar on the way to school, the boy feels sad, and lapses into a fit of regret :

"The odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven."

P. G. Wodehouse's humour about food does not proceed either from the sheer quantity of its supply or from the hearty zest with which it is enjoyed. He is no less touched and tickled by the same subject. But his entertainment flows from quite different and unexpected aspects and attitudes. Sometimes the sense of frustration of the meals nobody ever eats is twisted into humour. Or, it is humour born naturally of the incongruity of the shocking meals. With such tendencies towards the abnormal, Wodehouse is not however, lacking in the straight-forward appreciation of carefully planned meals.

In *the Juice of an Orange* Wodehouse exploits the handicap of people on a diet, and jokes at the self-imposed austerity of vegetarians, both of whom can not freely enjoy a hearty meal, but have to remain content with non-savoury items like simple orange juice.

Wodehouse is equally effusive, in *Jeeves and the Old School Chums*, in describing a magnificent picnic lunch with four-fold sandwiches and a rich assortment of nonvegetarian dishes and drinks, with a few vegetarian menus thrown in :

"Ham sandwiches and tongue sandwiches and potted meat sandwiches and game sandwiches, and hard-boiled eggs and lobster and a cold chicken and sardines and a cake and a couple of bottles of Bollinger and some old brandy."

And to add to the joke of the situation, the bottles last listed nobody ever gets round to for 'my man', Jeeves, for the best of reasons. People rather fail to put them in the dicky of the car.

Another superb meal which was not eaten for psychological reasons was the one at Brinkley Court. Bertie had advised everyone at the table to push the dishes aside untasted. This self-denial was no easy matter for those present, in consideration of their avidity and the excellent quality of the food offered. The 'browsing and sluicing' was of the highest quality. There was particularly one dish—the *nonnettes de poulet Agnes Sorel*, and still another no less attractive, *cepes a'la Rossini*, which "tested resolution to the utmost." No wonder that the unpleasant situation of non-participation of the dinner led to the resignation of Anatole.

The character of Anatole in the story may be regarded as the very

impersonation of the spirit of unqualified straightforward appreciation of great cooking, of elaborate preparation and magnificent serving of food. On how many and frequent occasions does he move in and out of the story with an apparently interminable succession of most varied menus ! And every flourish of a fresh dish is splendidly punctuated by ever-new fits of exciting temperaments, now effusive in joy and then over-brimming with wonder, but always taking the fullest relish and interest, and never indifferent to such a vital things as food and its disposal.

In sharp contrast to jolly meals in which everyone takes a hearty interest there come some meals which are designed to shock the sensibility of all students of the subject. When Bingo Little is in love with the waitress in the bunshop he blushes, looking like the Souls Awakening done in pink, and orders a cup of cocoa, cold veal-and-ham pic, a slice of fruit cake and a macaroon, and offers Bertie Wooster a bit of hot steak-pudding with a sparkling limado to wash it down. On this Bertie rightly observes,

“The way love can change a fellow is really frightful to contemplate. This was a man I had seen in happier days telling the head waiter at Claridge’s exactly how he wanted the chef to prepare the *sole frite an gourmet aux champignous*, and saying he would jolly well sling it back if it was n’t just right”.

Wodehouse’s Jeeves shudders at another meal which is remarkable in a way. This is the Tea party Bertie gives to the Sons of the Red Dawn. It is High Tea provided with plenty : muffins, jam, ham, cake, scrambled eggs, and five or six wagon-loads of sardines. Bertie’s observation too are remarkable :

“Funny how one changes as the years roll on. At school, I remember, I would cheerfully have sold my soul for scrambled eggs and sardines at five in the afternoon : but somehow since reaching man’s estate I had rather dropped out of the habit, and I am bound to admit I was appealed to a goodish extent at the way the sons and daughters of the Revolution shoved their head down and went for the foodstuffs.”

In the description of food by writers like ‘Saki’ and Evelyn Waugh there is found a more cautious attitude towards the quantity consumed and a more religious feeling for its quality than in Dickens. There has come a marked change in the evolution of tastes and fashions in food. What had been neglected as petty came to be looked up as pretty enough.

For instance, ‘oysters, which in Dickens’s time were the food of the poor, are now a particularly cherished luxury of the rich, and one finds Saki’s young men eating *recherche* little meals in which they take a great

interest in the exact preparation of the hollandaise sauce to go with the asperagus.' •

In one of his stories Saki almost approaches a Dickensian magnificence in description of food. *The Chaplet* is about Monsieur Aristide Sancourt, Chef of the Grand Sybaris Hotel, who has a speciality which he has brought to a pitch of perfection that almost amounts to scandal. It is *Canetons a' la mode d' Ambleve*.

Saki starts on a high pitch right from the menu card :

"In thin gilt lettering on the creamy white of the menu how little those words conveyed to the bulk of the imperfectly educated diners. And yet how much specialized effort had been lavished, how much carefully treasured love had been ungarnered, before those six words could be written. In the Department of Deux-Sevres ducklings had lived peculiar and beautiful lives and died in the odour of satiety to furnish the main theme of the dish ; champignous, which even a purist for Saxon English would have hesitated to address as mushrooms, had contributed their languorous atrophied bodies to the garnishing, and a sauce devised in the twilight reign of the Fifteenth Louis had been summoned back from the imperishable past to take its part in this wonderful confection".

There is a world of difference between this presentation by Saki and Dickens's roast goose at Mrs. Cratchit's in *the Christmas Carol*. While Dickens took just a human interest in food, Saki's approach to his chosen dish is essentially sensuous.

In Evelyn Waugh's treatment of food, humour overflows from a rare amalgam of Dickensian humanity and zest in eating with Saki's excess of gourmandise sensuousness, and a touch of the queer and the grotesque superadded. The entire outlay—both ingredients and equipage of food, the characters of diners and the amenities available—suggests an Alice-in-the-Wonderland sort of fancifulness and whimsicality in its atmosphere.

In Waugh's *Helena*, at the court of old King Cole, he has an opportunity denied to many other writers : it is the fantastic arrangement for his diners to visit the vomitorium during a meal and thus extend it indefinitely. And the ladies of the court do not loll in many styles deep in the cushions to be fed by a whole retinue of liveried slaves ; they sumptuously squat square to their victuals at a low table, roll back their sleeves, in the manner of children for below their age, and thrust their hands well into the pot.

Then follows the usual elaboration of the contents of the table :

"The plain but abundant fare comprised oysters stewed with saffron, boiled crabs, soles fried in butter, sucking-pig seethed in milk, roast capons, titbits of lamb spitted between slices of onion, a simple sweet

confection of honey and eggs and cream, and a deep Samian pitcher of home-brewed mead"—a complete list of items for chewing, sucking, licking and drinking. Whether the description is purely imaginary or is based on reality, it reflects the genuine relish of a healthy eater.

In *Scoop* Waugh improvises a meal no less imposing than that described in *Helena*. It is indeed too rich to be digested even by the toughest stomach. A good assortment of meat secured from the tripple sources of water, air and land, of fish and birds and quadrupeds, composes the dishes. And the meal gains its point particularly from the fact that the host, the mysterious Mr. Baldwin, has only that day arrived in the backwoods by parachute. Even this man with a rough life is afraid that the stuff may be rather tough for him :

"They had scraped up fresh river fish and stewed them with white wine and aubergines ; also a rare local bird which combined the tender flavour of partridge with the solid bulk of the turkey ; they had roasted it and stuffed it with bananas, almonds and red peppers, also a baby gazelle which they had seethed with truffles in its mother's milk ; also a dash of feathery arab pastry and a heap of unusual fruits".

Confronted with all this, Mr. Baldwin observes,

"Well, I suppose it will not hurt us to rough it for once".

The utterance, let us imagine, is punctuated by a sucking in of a watering mouth, and not unaccompanied by an involuntary sigh.

From Dickens to Waugh : an unbroken tradition in gastronomical humour. .

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IMAGE AND SYMBOL IN DICKENS *

AMITABHA SINHA

I

AN examination of Dickens's images and symbols is necessary, granting the recent, and to my mind just, cautions against an "extreme" approach to them.¹ The subject is far from exhausted, notwithstanding the admirable work done in this direction since Edmund Wilson.² Mostly, such criticisms are indications rather than fullscale explorations of the images. Then again, while the items seem to be all there in these commentaries, "fog", "dust", "river", and so forth, quite a few are not, as I shall try to show. This essay, however, does not hold any ambitious project of saying something entirely new on the subject. It will be concerned with simple tasks : making a fresh examination of the images and symbols in the light of the possibilities left by earlier criticism, describing Dickens's skill in building them into his fictional structure, and making a general estimate—which is not usually done.

Certain dangers latent in a discussion of Dickens's images and symbols, however, require to be pointed out—especially if it be of recurrent patterns, which this essay will largely deal with. For, Dickens's novels literally bulge with the prodigious persistence of such "old-fashioned" elements as vitality, incident, character, humour, commentary, and so forth. An attempt to draw a neat graph of images and symbols in isolation is liable to overlook large parts of meanings which these elements express. Moreover, such an attempt may lead to the discovery of meanings where they do not exist—which is especially true of Dickens who was not of the type of novelists to load every rift with the ore of symbolism—, so that the haystack would seem to bristle with needles, as it were. Finally, this may lead to the discovery of "symbols" which are not deliberate techniques used by the author but are unconscious betrayals of his subjectivity (necessary for biography but not for the exploration of fictional art.) I shall, therefore, look at those images and symbols which have the author's consent, so to say, perform functions which could not

* Page-references, when necessary for intricate textual exposition, are to the *New Oxford Illustrated Dickens*, Geoffrey Cumberlege, O. U. P., London. As far as possible, I have made chapter-references.

have been done in another manner, and take into consideration meanings and nuances reflected by other, non-imagistic elements. Although my general concern will be with the recurrent patterns, I shall pay proper attention to their local functions, too. At this stage I should state—in order to avoid any confusion that by “Image” and “Symbol” I shall mean any metaphorical and symbolical association, whether figurative or in objects—in descriptions as well in narration. It requires to be pointed out that in Dickens these appear mostly in descriptions; this is not of the least importance, for these descriptions with their lush details indicate the tremendous charge of local vitality through which Dickens’s recurrent patterns find their effects.

My own findings agreeing with the general view that images and symbols become prominent in Dickens’s later novels—to my mind from the 1850’s onward—I shall concentrate on what I find to be the most representative images in such novels, making a selective survey. However, the earlier novels are not altogether without imagistic references. For instance, the recurrent fire set by the rioters in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841); the fire is not merely a repeated activity, but also the externalization of their deep motive of destruction (so that they are almost invariably prompted to set things ablaze; e. g., Chs. LIV, LV, LVI, LXIV, LXV, LXVII, LXVIII.) Or, in the same novel, Barnaby’s queer, weird, talking raven acts as the radiation of the animalistic diabolism which the half-wit Barnaby shows (e. g., Chs. LVIII, LVIV, LXII, LXIII.) Then, in *Pickwick* (1836-37), we have the symbolic equation made by Sam Weller between the caged bird and the debtors’ prison, which John Killham has pointed out,³ and *Oliver Twist* (1838) is full of nightmare-images, which have been mentioned, for instance, by Arnold Kettle⁴. However, these are mostly emblems in their simplest form, and are, rather too obvious, without much of oblique art. In the later novels, as we shall see, there is obliquity, complexity, and variety, and a greater relevance to the meanings of the novels.

II

It would be well to start by looking at those images which are localized in a context. I would re-emphasize that it is his locally vitalized descriptions which largely contribute to the meanings of Dickens’s image—and symbol-patterns (although occurrences of objects or tropes, as we shall later see, also have their share), the vitality in its turn giving a rich modulating texture to the patterns. I have not scope enough to deal with this latter aspect in my general analysis of the total patterns. What is important is that in Dickens quite often this local vitality enjoys an autonomy from the rigidity of the patterns and shows its contextual, imagistic

function. I shall give three instances, taking them from patterns I have analyzed later, to make my point clear.

At its extreme, this vitality may even tend to subvert the pattern it belongs to, as, for example, in the "light"-image that reflects Little Dorrit's feeling during the Italian journey.

Again, there would be places where they stayed the week together.....where there were winking lamps of gold and silver among pillars and arches.....where there was the mist and scent of incense: where there were pictures, fantastic images, gaudy altars, great heights and distances all softly lighted through stained glass.....

• (Little Dorrit, Bk. III, Ch. III)

The effect of sensuous gorgeousness which the lamps and the stained light produces, supported by the array of other, visual and olfactory images, refers in the context of the chapter to Little Dorrit's uncomfortable and unaccustomed feeling about her father's new "fortune" (pining for her old Marshalsea prison-home, she repeatedly feels such things as unrealities). This symbolism is no doubt impressive. At the same time, however, it should be noticed that it disrupts the pattern made of "artificial light"-images in the novel by going against its general significances—which I have analyzed later.

Sometimes, while conforming to the general pattern, a local metaphor gives an extra load of meaning to it, which goes beyond the original. Thus, for instance, the description of the river, as the train moves across it in *Our Mutual Friend*:

Then the train rattled..... until it shot over across the river: bursting over the surface like a bomb-shell.....A little more, and again it roared across the river, a great rocket: spurning the watery turnings and doublings with ineffable contempt, and going straight to its end, as Father Time goes to his. To whom it is no matter what living waters run high or low, reflect the heavenly lights and darkness, produce their little growth of weeds and flowers, turn here, turn there, are noisy or still, are troubled or at rest, for their course has one sure termination.....

(Bk. IV, Ch. XI)

In the context of the general "river"-pattern of the novel, the significance of the passage lies in the long last clause, which transcends and moulds the diverse meanings of the river into the sense of "death", that we shall see later. Yet, while not disturbing this general significance, the weight of the passage consists in the additional complication of the image of rushing supercilious Time in the train. The load of its metaphysical

significance—absorbing the “river” through the parallelism of “straight to its end” and “one sure termination”—easily pulls it out of the general pattern.

Or, such a local image, through its vitality, simply produces such an effect which, while belonging within the pattern, yet makes it an independent entity. This we see, for instance, in the image of the sea in *Dombey and Son* :

The waves are hoarse with repetition of their mystery ; the dust lies piled upon the shore ; the sea-birds soar and hover ; the winds and clouds go forth upon the tremendous flight ; the white arms beckon, in the moonlight, to the invisible country far away (Ch. XLI).

This fully conforms to the significance of the adventures and the marvels of “sea” in the novel. However, apart from its descriptive value, the passage through the piling up of its components (“waves”, “dust”, “sea-birds”, “winds and clouds”) and imagistic words (“trackless”, “white”, “invisible”)—becomes a local image of the romance of the sea that can be enjoyed in its own right even if the pattern were forgotten.

The significance of this local vitality perhaps has a bearing also on Dickens’s patterns. For, such instances show that—let alone the fact of its overriding the general pattern-meanings—Dickens’s imagination even in the limited scope of a context refuses to get bogged down into a chiselled artifice : excessive vitality must breathe through it, exactly as in the intensification of his episodes. Examples cannot be multiplied here, but they are incorporated in my discussions of the patterns below.

III

Now, the patterns. I would begin by analyzing those images which operate in limited contexts of a novel and reflect part of its meaning. First, I shall discuss images with a fixed meaning, which I shall follow with those with multiple meanings.

An elementary instance, showing how Dickens imagistically transmutes the background of a situation, is in the “mist” accompanying the Dover Mail journey in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859.) As Jarvis Lorry proceeds with other passengers in the carriage, a “steaming mist” rises up the hill “like an evil spirit” ; after some time, Jerry—as the unknown rider on horse-back—gallops up, his voice calling “from the mist”, and mysterious messages are exchanged between him and Lorry ; the episode over, “heavy wreaths” of mist close round the coach (Ch. II.) The mist, while it stands in its own right as atmosphere-creating background, thus metaphorically externalizes the mystery of the situation (its “closing round”

parallel to the passengers' mystification about Lorry's message, "Redeemed to Life") and also forebodes the general theme of mystery and evil in the later sections of the novel.

Dickens, however, is capable of greater complexity even in such "fixed" images. The "marsh-mist" cluster in the first stage of *Great Expectations* (1862) is a typical example, appearing in descriptions and figures and refracting in the contextual variations the sense of evil, mystery, and oppression which dominates Pip's childhood and of which he seeks to be free. In the opening description of the novel, before and after the terrifying and mysterious Magwitch's arrival, the marsh wears a black aspect, representing Pip's typically dismal state of mind. The "wilderness" is "dark", the sea from where the wind blows to the marsh is "a savage lair" (the source of evil, referring to Magwitch's approach), the marsh itself is a "long black horizontal line" and the sky above it a mixture of red and black; the only two things that stand upright are "black things" (Ch. I.) In a subsequent context, the mist rises from the marsh and, intensified in the typically Dickensian repetitive style, conforms to the terror and mystery in Pip's meeting with Magwitch and Compeyson (Ch. III); the same imagistic correspondence continues in the hunt for the convicts in the marshes in wind and rain—again, a "dismal wilderness" (Ch. V.) This sense of mystery and horror colours the image of the smoke of fire in Miss Havisham's chamber as "our own marsh mist" and thereby makes the smoke a metaphor of the dismal darkness of Miss Havisham's personality (Ch. XI.) Somewhat later, the villain Orlick, after he has attacked and stunned Mrs. Gargery, is met by Pip in a heavy mist that rises from the marshes. (Ch. XV—the marsh-association of Orlick is repeated in his attack on Pip in Chs. LII-LIII.) The total meaning of the marsh-mist that accumulates through all these contextual functions—spiritual obfuscation and feeling of evil—is most powerfully expressed in the casual metaphor in Pip's decision on the eve of his journey to London to "finish off the marshes", that is, his early childhood life. (Ch. XIX.) At the same time, Pip's blunder in his "gentlemenliness" is ironically rendered in terms of the marshes which invariably accompany him; when he returns from Miss Havisham, with "Joe's furnace flinging a path of fire" (Ch. XI): but Pip does not realize at this time that Joe is, and ultimately will prove to be, the way out of his "marsh"-life.

Quite often, however, Dickens's images, even in limited contexts, propel themselves towards a greater variety of meaning. Even the "marsh"- "mist" of *Great Expectations* tends to this direction. For example, the mist, rising on the eve of Pip's journey to London, not only refers to the

evils of his childhood, but also ironically refers to a new meaning, the evil of his future life. (Ch. XIX) Again, the coming sun on the morning of the episode of Magwitch's escape is imaged as "a marsh of fire" (Ch. LIII.) This obviously stands for Pip's feelings of joy and hope, and at the same time is underlined by the irony of the terror and violence waiting for him.

Such an image with a changing meaning, which also offers structural links, is what can be called "underground" in *Hard Times* (1854), coloured no doubt by the background of the Coketown coal-pits in the story. First, it apparently acts with a fixed meaning in the comedy of Mrs. Sparsit's "Staircase"-image (Dickens calls it "allegorical fancy") of the married Louisa's affair with James Harthouse as climbing "down, down, down" a "staircase, with a *dark pit of shame and ruin at the bottom.*" The image is continually hammered, with words like "pit", "gulf" and "bottom" as Mrs. Sparsit keeps watching the gradually intensifying drama. (Chs. XXVI, XXVII, italics mine.) What is interesting is that this is immediately, and subtly preceded by the image of a voice going to the dying Mrs. Gradgrind's ears—"taking such a long time in getting down...that she might have been *lying at the bottom of a well*" (Ch. XXV, italic mine)—the "well", a variant of pit, of course referring to death. One of the subsequent images of Louisa's affair—descent "to the black gulfs at the bottom" is followed immediately by the narration of Mr. Gradgrind's learning of his wife's death and "burying" her (Ch. XXVII)—so that the image acquires an ambiguity from the ironical juxtaposition of physical and moral collapse. All this, however, is a preparation for the big event where the actuality and the image meet: the fall of Stephen Blackpool—who, though innocent, is charged with robbery—in the disused Old Hell Shaft, followed by his death. (Ch. XXXIV.) "The dark pit of shame and ruin" in Mrs. Sparsit's image, thus becomes ironically true of Stephen—although he is redeemed from it in his death.

Greater symbolic quality accrues to the "sea" in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), Dickens's last novel, with more complex variety in meaning and a subtler illumination of character and structure. It first appears in an image of the Cathedral music: the monotonous mutter of the service is "drowned...in a sea of music" which rises and falls and then goes 'dry'. (Ch. IX.) Later, we see another meaning in "sea", when Crisparkle contrasts the "wild and noisy sea"—here an actuality and not a figure—with the quietness of his abode, while the Landless brother and sister go by. (Ch. X). Here the sea metaphorically refers to the Landlesses, especially Neville, whose wildness is explicit in the story, and this meaning is reinforced in Helena's subsequent declaration of her liking for the sea. (*Ibid*).

"Sea" assumes a more important meaning in respect of Jasper whose house is imaged as a lighthouse, which stands on "the margin of the tide of busy life" (Ch. XIV), and the gates of which the "waves" cannot pass. (Ch. XII). We understand the complex symbolism of the images if we remember the earlier association of "sea" with church-music and the fact that Jasper himself is the choir-master. This gives meaning to "lighthouse" as an externalized as well as figurative image of the opium-crazy, guilt-ridden, "dark" aspect of Jasper's split personality, to which he retires in his hatred of Church service and sacred values, (See. e.g. ch. III.) This meaning of "lighthouse" is rendered in terms of narrative action when Datchery, imaged as a mariner "on a dangerous voyage," approaches the "warning light" of Jasper's lighthouse. (Ch. XXIII). Not only does it reflect Datchery's mystified feeling ; the symbolism clearly gives a clue to the mystery never solved in this unfinished novel—for the implication is that the detective would finally track down the murder in Jasper. Dickens, however, seems to give an inexhaustible supply of meanings even to this secondary image. For, the sea suggests yet another significance—in the emergence of the Sailor Tartar near the end, who has a "Sea-going air" even in his chambers (Chs. XXI, XXII). Rosa, who is developing an emotional relationship with him, after Edwin's disappearance, revives her spirits by reading books of voyages and adventures. (Ch. XII.) "Sea", by implication, thus illuminates the sense of hope and regeneration that underlies this novel of decay and gloom. Pushed on so many levels of meaning, and linking up diverse characters and areas of action, "sea" thus nearly approaches what the late E. K. Brown called an "expanding symbol".⁵

IV

At least in limited areas of a novel, therefore, images and symbols are important aspects of Dickens's fictional rhetoric,—both structurally and as devices for reflecting meanings. I now turn to pervasive images and symbols those which dominate the total structures of novels and, as such, are of greater importance, at least in weightage (some of these contain limited images, too, as we shall see.). The first anticipation of such images, to my mind, is found even before the '50's—as far back as in *Dombey and Son* (1846.) Once more, this is the persistently Dickensian "sea", although on a much simple level. Its importance is felt from the beginning of the novel, in the image of Mrs. Dombey's death. (Ch. I.) It is subsequently associated with a greater prominence to the hero Walter Gay, in its marvellous, adventurous, romantic aspect. (e.g., Chs. IV, IX.) This aspect is related more powerfully to young Paul and Florence,

especially the former whose imagination is haunted by visions of sea in moonlight and starlight. (e.g., Chs. VIII, XIII, XIV, XVI.) In Paul's case, the romantic aspect is finally associated with his death, in which the image of his mother's death richly reverberates. (Ch. XVI.) The connexion of the sea with Walter and Florence anticipates the later voyages in the novel, where the sea becomes the symbolic agent of their union. (Chs. XIX, XXXII, LVI-LVII.) The emotional overtone of this meaning is consummated in the "voices of the waves" as the image of "eternal and illimitable" love in Florence's heart for Walter and Paul (Ch. LVII). "Sea" thus becomes an imagistic radiation of her personality. The reunion of her father and Florence, the conclusion of the novel, is also celebrated in sea-terms, since it comes through Florence's son "born at Sea" (Ch. LIX), followed by the walk of the family on the beach. (Ch. LXII.)

What one feels, though, about this pattern in *Dombey* is that, notwithstanding its over-all nature, it is not central to the book's meaning. For it bears only upon Florence's area of interest in the novel, but not upon Dombey's, who is at the centre (despite occasional "sea"-references to him.) Moreover, the "marvellous" meaning of the sea, redolent of death and metaphysics, is not carried to a satisfactory conclusion.

For a central as well as pervasive pattern, one had at first better look at *Edwin Drood*. The different mysteries of this novel have been much explored—for instance, Datchery's identity, the possible conclusion of the novel, and so forth, but not so much of the Cathedral which impresses the novel throughout with a semi-mystic presence.

To start, with, the Cathedral represents the novel's theme, the decay of ancient, moral glory and beauty, and what has rightly been observed, the split in English civilization (the High Church Anglicanism being a symbol of this), as embodied in Jasper's split personality. The hoary, ancient aspect of the Cathedral and its city, untouched by modern times and in a state of decay (the name Cloisterham is itself suggestive) is time and again buttressed through such words and phrases as "another and a bygone time", "hoarse", "throat of old time", "mouldy sigh", "voices of their nursery time", and through images of decay as "rusty", "dusty", "sepulchral", "tomb", in its descriptions. (e.g., pp. 1, 8, 19, 55, 93, 154, 177.)

The keynote of the symbolism is struck with the Cathedral's first appearance on the opening page, seen from Jasper's point of view, all its values drowned by his opium-crazy vision :

An ancient English Cathedral Tower? How can the ancient English Cathedral be here! The well-known massive grey square

of the *old Cathedral* ? How can that be here ! There is no *spike of rusty iron* in the air...from any point of the *real prospect*... Maybe it is set up by the Sultan's orders...It is so, for cymbals clash, and the Sultan goes by to his palace...still the Cathedral Tower rises in the background, *where it cannot be*, and still no *writhing figure* is on the *grim spike*...Stay ! Is the spike so low a thing as the *rusty spike* on the top of an *old bedstead* that has tumbled all *awry*.

The repetition of the adjectives "old" and "ancient" in respect of the Cathedral, in combination with the repetition of interrogations and interjections and such phrases as "real prospect", immediately suggests the theme of non-existence of values : "awry" in the grimly comic image confirms it. The "writhing figure", in a kind of inverted symbolism, suggests crucifixion, not without an association with the crusade-theme in the Oriental imagery—with Jasper of course taking the Satanic, anti-Christ stand. The idea is reinforced at the end of the chapter, but from the other point of view of Jasper's "normal" personality, when he goes to attend his duty as choir-master : to the sensually and spiritually "jaded" Jasper, the Cathedral, just like life is to him, is drained of all values. It is here "massive", "grey",—echoing the phrase in the former passage—the choir get on their "sullied" robes, and the service, "When the Wicked Man" suggests the wistful desire for salvation in Jasper's guilt-ridden mind (p.4.)

Dickens does not of course force us to accept this meaning, or meaninglessness, of the Cathedral—making it come through the "unreliable" narrative medium of Jasper's feelings. But the cancellation of old values—not merely religious—is symbolized in Cathedral terms from other points of view, too. When Edwin and Rosa cancel their engagement in the precincts of the Cathedral, "the old city lay red", "For they (Edwin and Rosa) were old already" (p. 152) ; the "oldness" of the Cathedral and Cloisterham and the "oldness" of their "engagement" are subtly associated together. Then again, as the action fast approaches Edwin's disappearance—in which the theme of denial of values is concentrated—, the Cathedral clock assumes an increasingly, symbolic value. It chimes with an ominous symbolism as Neville and Edwin go simultaneously, but unseen by one another, to the fatal dinner (pp. 159, 162). On that night of Edwin's disappearance—no doubt with Jasper's complicity—, a storm blows, and in a spate of terrific symbolism, "the hands of the Cathedral clock are torn off", even before the disappearance is discovered (p.168.). It seems that all the values of the Cathedral are gone with the act : Time has come to a stop. Jasper's vision after all seems to be true.

However, the Cathedral, also symbolizes the survival of values, even during and after this explosion of the force of evil—especially in terms of the subsidiary image-series of its music of bell and organs. For Edwin and Rosa, the choir has a difference from the earlier discordance of Jasper's words (p.29 ; ironically, since Jasper is choir-master) ; the bell and organ, along with the rooks, render the Minor Canon Corner a quiet abode for ages (p. 50) ; under the spell of moonlight the Cathedral dissolves Neville's passionate thoughts (p. 77) ; the music changes the sepulchral aspect of Cathedral (p 93), and so forth. Finally, the Cathedral holds out the promise of regeneration after the hideous climax with the "glorious light" of "a brilliant morning" penetrating into the Cathedral, subduing its "earthly odour" and preaching "the Resurrection and the Life" (p.277.) This is not abstract, being confirmed by the emerging Tartar-Rosa relationship and Datchery (his "white" hair and relatively young body suggesting the regeneration of the hoary Cathedral.) Connecting all the areas of the action and affecting almost all the major personalities (even the opium-woman and the urchin Deputy), the Cathedral thus becomes a total symbol of the book as it stands in its unfinished form.

The tautly organised image, however, is not typical of Dickens whose pervasive patterns tend to be free and more multiple-levelled : the Cathedral is an exception. For such an image, central to the novel's meaning, I turn to *Our Mutual Friend* (1865.) Of its two, well-known, dominant, images, "river" and "dust"—which bear on the central money-theme from two angles—I shall concentrate on the former as more representative of the aspect of Dickens's images and symbols I am talking about.⁶

The "river", however, does not stand by "money" alone, and is also of a transcendental nature. But at first its association with money—to be precise, the evils deriving from money—requires to be looked at. Even the Bella-Rokesmith area of the action (which belongs to be "dust"-pattern) bears this out : in the "mercenary" Bella's day-dreams—while she looks at the river—voyages, ships, everything pertaining to the river, stand for money : even her husband, she dreams, would be so rich as to own all the ships and yachts (p. 318), more sinister meanings, however, are given to the money-association of "river" elsewhere—especially in terms of ooze and slime (which refers to the filthy aspect of money.) Riverside characters such as Gaffer and Riderhood, moving through the mud of the river, earn their gruesome living by towing the dead and even by taking their money. (e.g. Ch. I) Not merely that, almost all the crimes and murders which streak the novel associate the river with money. Dickens gives us the metaphorical perspective in Lizzie's feeling of "the murky

shade of Murder striking at her heart," while, in the "melancholy" riverside wilderness, the tidal swell breaks at her feet (p. 70.) "As the story shows, the supposed drowning of John Harmon is for money, and by a person who himself is instead murdered with the same motive ; Bradley's jealousy, which makes him nearly murder and pitch Eugene into the river, partly derives from his feelings about his own poverty ; the drowning both of Bradley and Riderhood is owing to the latter's pursuit of the former for money ; and so forth. The drowning-associations of most of these are no doubt a metaphor of the over whelming of human values by money.

On another and an opposite level of meaning, "river" has an idyllic, purifying aspect, referring to "liberation"—liberation, for instance, in terms of love and union. Thus, not only does Lizzie's and Eugene's relationship consummate, after their ordeal, by the pastoral riverside (Bk. IV, Ch. XI) ; but even their first meeting took place in the London riverside (this transmutes the city-river in a regenerative manner), as Lizzie perpetually reminds us (e.g. pp. 34, 527, 528.) The same meaning is seen in Bella's union with Rokesmith, also after her ordeal (comic though it is) : as their reconciliatory meeting is linked up with the river while its "great, serene mirror" reflects what is "peaceful, pastoral, and blooming" (p. 522.) "River" is liberation in another sense for Betty Higden who takes the course of the pastoral Thames in her flight from, shame and terror, and eventually finds in it as she dies by the river--the "tender" end of her journey (pp. 504-12)

Allied to "liberation", but distinguished from it, is the well-known suggestion of "regeneration". As the main line of the story goes, John Harmon is drowned but is brought back to life as Rokesmith. This figurative regeneration is counterpointed on the one hand by Riderhood and on the other by Eugene. Riderhood's rescue, after his drowning (Bk. III, Ch.III), only to be followed by his drowning to death later, just shows his incapacity for regeneration. The more important case of Eugene's rescue from drowning by Lizzie after Bradley's assault on him (Bk. IV, Ch. VI) is symbolical of his moral regeneration. Lizzie being so much below her station, Eugene would not at first marry her, for all his love for her. The river as such is felt to be hostile to him in the tremendous irony of its presentation in the assault-scene. While Eugene is going to meet Lizzie after tracking her down in the paper mill, the afternoon river—conforming to his mental state—is pastorally tranquil and peaceful (pp. 689, 690 ; foreshadowed in p. 629.) This is ironical, for, after nine pages, the pastoral perspective of the night's reflection in the river (from Eugene's angle) suddenly changes as Bradley pounces upon

him and, with a dreadful crash, "the reflected night turned crooked" (p. 698.) Months later, when his prospect of living is still uncertain, Eugene gets rid of his moral weakness and determines to marry Lizzie (pp. 741-42); and he fully recovers from the effects of drowning, only after this moral regeneration is completed in his marriage with Lizzie (p. 752.)

Beyond all these meanings, the river has a transcendental significance. This appears in an image in the course of an omniscient commentary near the end of the novel (in the context of the Eugene-episode), where Time does not care for the river's activities except its final aim to reach the sea—the sea by implication being death (p. 751, quoted above.) Sure enough, this meaning blends and transcends various other images and meanings of the river as death, that we have seen above of the river is thus two-fold: on the one hand Dickens shows admirable control by keeping it fairly away from the comic, Boffin sub-area of the action which is kept for the dry and satiric "dust-mound"; on the other hand he makes it cover the central interests of the action so that it gives a structural control over the novel.

The typically Dickensian imagination which such multiple-level, pervasive patterns show is at its highest in a number of such patterns simultaneously reflecting the novel's meanings from different directions and interweaving with one another. While other novels, even *Our Mutual Friend*, show this, the most representative instances are in three broad patterns in *Little Dorrit* (1857.)

While the novel has claimed attention for its "prison" symbol or "emblem", as Lionel Trilling calls it,⁷ the prison to my mind is rather a theme than an image or a symbol. The metaphorical associations in the novel lie elsewhere—among them the three patterns I shall discuss, which I am not aware of having been critically discussed so far. These three are "sun", "light" and "fire"—actually two, if we consider that the second derives from the first. Yet, in the novel, the sun has an autonomy in status as a heavenly body moving in its course in the sky, and with associations of heat, which distinguishes it from light. I shall, therefore, consider "sun" with its related aspect of sunshine and non-solar "light" as separate images.

The all consuming structure which "sun" gives to the novel is revealed in its occurrence in the beginning and the ending (pp. 1, 826.) Moreover, the tolerant and broad outlook in "the sunshine and shade" of the ending, widening into the metaphysical association of "sun" with the "pilgrimage of life" (p. 27), indicates Dickens's panoramic view of life in this novel, for all his criticism of money and society. The importance of "sun", however, consists in more complex meanings.

The first meaning is "freedom" as opposed to the darkness of imprisonment and evil. In the opening scene, the blazing sun beating at the Marseilles is contrasted with its dark interior where Blandois/Rigaud and Cavalletto lodge (Ch. I)—the "blaze" an implicit denunciation of the evil Blandois, which is later confirmed by the "wrathful sunset" by which he arrives at Mrs. Clennam's house (p. 124.) With this is juxtaposed the more typical sun in relation to Marshal sea where some good people live. The sun rays on the spikes of Marshal sea make them look "cruel", while Mr. and Little Dorrit are there, which is contrasted with the sunrise on Nature, standing for full freedom (p. 231). Much later, the hot sun is associated with Clennam in Marshal sea (p. 720), and, as he is to be released, Little Dorrit comes in with the sunshine (p. 824.) On another level of meaning, the sun is associated with "material fortune". This absorbs the former meaning when Mr. Dorrit is released upon his unexpectedly coming into money; as he receives the news, he is 'in the sunlight by the window', "bright upon the wall and the spikes" (p. 418.) Later on this meaning becomes more prominent when Mr. Dorrit sits in the glow of his fortune in "the brilliant light of a bright Italian day" (p. 478), and when, forgetting his past, he makes his journey with the sun "shining on his equipage" (pp. 634-35; also see p. 428.) This suggestion even ignites such a stray image as of the waters of Venice and the ruins of Rome "sunning themselves for the pleasure of the Dorrit family" (p. 514.) "Sun" as 'fortune' is connected also to the money-magnate, Mr. Merdle (e.g. p. 614) and to Casby who, with the "heated" and angry Pancks near him, drinks golden sherry as if he were "drinking the evening sunshine" (p. 797.)

The sun, above all, symbolizes goodness, opposed to evil, with different connotations. For example, the cheerful, "sun-browned", Meagles's face is "like a sun" (pp. 810, 822); the sun rises above the mud when Cavalletto runs away from Blandois (p. 134) and becomes warm when Blandois fades out of Little Dorrit's mind (p. 457); finally, the collapse of Mrs. Clennam's gloomy house is immediately followed by the early sun (p. 794.) The meaning of "sun" as "goodness", however, converges on Little Dorrit. This is well brought out in the confrontation between Mrs. Clennam's "black figure in the shade" and Little Dorrit looking from "the softened light of the window to the shining sky" (p. 792.) This goodness, imbued with a Christian Symbolism, is consummated in Little Dorrit's and Clennam's marriage, with "the sun shining upon them through the painted figure of Christ" (p. 825—this Christian association is fore-shadowed in p. 773) and then in "the fresh perspective of the street in the autumn morning sun's bright rays" (p. 826.) The final

concentration of the sun's meaning on *Little Dorrit* thus indeed confirms the cover-design of the novel's original edition in monthly parts, where *Little Dorrit* stands in the centre in a shaft of sunlight.⁸

Non-solar "light" in the form of candles, lamps, light from the source of fire, etc. is based on the persistently Dickensian "light vs darkness" background. One of its functions is to intensify darkness, the latter standing for mystery, guilt, and evil. Scattered in diverse images, this links up different areas of darkness in the novel: for example, Affery's thoughts of the possibility of *Little Dorrit*'s murder by candlelight (p. 53); the reflection of Bridge Lamps in the water "like demon eyes, with a terrible fascination in them for guilt and misery" (p. 174); Flora's image of the "country.....dark with lanterns and umbrellas" (p. 152); the lamp borne by the dirty old woman in the evil Miss Wade's house" (p. 326); and so forth. This meaning is especially seen in the light perpetually burning in Mrs. Clennam's dark, depressing house (e.g. pp. 31, 178-79, 681, 789), contrasted with the sun ray seldom touching it. Mrs. Clennam's light takes on a special significance in relation to Affery who contributes both to the mystery of the house and its solution in light-term—the latter being in full knowledge of the secrets of the house, suggested by her physical association with "lamp" (e.g. pp. 34, 41, 352, 544, 549.) As she later reveals the secrets (Bk. IV, Ch XXX), some time after Clennam has asked her to "light us" down the stairs in order to throw "light...on the secrets of this house" (pp. 686-89), the figurative and actual images of light (mystery and solution) are ironically juxtaposed.

A special gradation of the meaning of "evil" attaches itself to light in respect of the villain Blandois, mixing with the light of Mrs. Clennam's house. We see this, for instance, in the suggestion of Blandois's evil nature by the "fitful illumination" of the dull glare of Flintwrinch's matches (p. 348) or when the flickering street-lamp throws finger-like shadows on hand-bills advertising Blandois's disappearance (pp. 625-26)—which give special meaning to the so many casual references in the novel to Blandois's association with candles and lamps. Yet, beneath this level of "evil," a fourth meaning of hope and cheer, reflecting the typical Dickensian optimism, is suggested by light: in characterizations, for instance, of Meagles, Clennam, and *Little Dorrit*, and in the presentation of cheerful indoors (e.g. pp. 165, 266, 338, 422, 432.)

The "fire"—image has a greater range of meanings: "homeliness", to which is associated "human warmth"; "timelessness"; "destruction"—both good and evil; "the evil deriving from money"; and "cheer and happiness"—a fair index of the novel's subject-matter.

At the lowest level is "homeliness", issuing forth from grates and hearths. This has a special significance in respect of Mr. Dorrit, accustomed for a long time to his life in Marshalsea, of which fire is a symbol to him. Usually, he is fond of dozing near the fire to which he goes for spiritual relief (e.g., pp. 441, 445, 625, 629.) Further, his internal tension between the past life and the present state of wealth (from where all homeliness is gone) is very well reflected in fire-terms. This we see, for instance, in his jealousy at seeing his brother and Little Dorrit sitting by the fire, which reminds him of his similar sessions with her in the past (pp. 639, 640.) The associated "warmth of human heart" is also suggested by "fire". This we see in such instances as Clennam's turning the warmth of fire upon Little Dorrit in a gush of pity (pp. 167, 170) or in his own image of flowers given to him by Chivery as "cheering of a fire" to cold hands (p. 756), and so forth (also see pp. 165, 176, 194.)

The fire in Mrs. Clennam's house has the totally different suggestion of timelessness—which compliments candlelight. The invalid Mrs. Clennam, thriving on her memory of her revenge and the secret she could not burn away—motives that date back to fifteen years ago—is, always linked with the fire (as with the light) which burns in her grate "like the night and day for fifteen years", accompanied by associated images of death and decay (e.g., pp. 33, 47, 178, 353, 762—rather similar to Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*.) "Fire" suggests "money—evil" in relation to the pretender Merdle (e.g., pp. 558, 561, 571) and to the hypocrite Casby (p. 691—in both cases, intensifying their connexion to "sun".) Its greater significance, however, is "destruction". This association of "fire" is suggested in the images of the characters both of Mrs. Clennam and Miss Wade (e.g., pp. 35, 772, 779, and 659, 665), both of whom seek to destroy moral goodness, and in the images of the ruin of Clennam's investment (pp. 711, 712.) As destruction, however, "fire" is especially connected to Blandois (here complimenting "light") who stands for the destruction of human values in his greed for money and the consequent crimes and blackmail. This connexion is brought out through his proximity to fire (physically as well as in others' minds), so that he becomes kind of an incendiary character (see, pp. 445, 457, 793) : as a matter of fact, this makes his habitual smoking symptomatic of his character (ironically, he smokes at the time of the collapse of the house which brings about his death—see p. 793.) But fire is destruction also in a good sense, as, for instance, in the images of the reformed Cavalletto's attitude to Blandois (pp. 134, 746), but most in the drama of the burning of Mrs. Clennam's secret paper

(Chs. XXX, XXXIV), which finally purges the novel's world of all its evils.

It is rather interesting that these pervasive images in *Little Dorrit* cross and recross one another at innumerable points, apart from their obvious connexions hinted at before. For instance, "fire" and "light" mix together in the presentation of Blandois's cynicism (p. 124); the same two images gather together to illuminate Mrs. Clennam's anticipation of Blandois (p. 179); "sun" and "fire" combine together in the imagistic description of Cavalletto's escape (pp. 113-34); the same two again meet in the reflection of Merdle's money-status (p. 614); while some such instances have already been mentioned in the analysis above, more need not be multiplied (see also pp. 30, 352-353, 442, 452, 638, 672, 824-25, for some more.) Perhaps these indicate a certain incapability in Dickens to focus on one object—so that he glides on from one to another. But if this be a weakness, Dickens turns it into a virtue, for the effect of these coalescent images is cumulative, like that of an image-cluster, which seems suitable to the many layers of theme in the novel.

V

Much has had to be necessarily left out of this discussion. But, my aim has been to show the broad features of Dickens's images and symbols rather than their subtle ramifications, and this, I hope, has been realized above. For one thing, we have seen that Dickens *could* rise above "emblems" to the level of intricate metaphorical associations and even to symbols. Surely, in their various functions of structural control, illumination of character, reflection of theme and meanings, the images and symbols constitute an important part of the pleasure of reading Dickens's novels. Moreover, these also hold clues to the less apparent aspects of his subject-matter : for instance, they reveal, as in *Little Dorrit* and *Our Mutual Friend*, some kind of a metaphysical view and an intricate insight into the problem of evil even in the midst of his famous social criticism.

Chronological development of images is not so important in Dickens's novels. But it is interesting indeed, when we think of the date of publication of his last novels, *Edwin Drood*, 1870, that Dickens achieved almost modern, compact organization one century ago. However, *Edwin Drood* is an exception. Usually, as we have seen, Dickens does not aspire after giving a neat, organic unity and order to his novels through the images and symbols. He was certainly no Henry James, nor a Joseph Conrad, not even a George Meredith. Unlike their works and of many others, his novels would not lose all their significances, although they would certainly suffer, if the images were taken away from them. Besides, a

certain lack of distance, a degree of obviousness and didacticism, despite all their obliquity, prevent the images and symbols, from fully "expanding" themselves (e.g. "light" in *Little Dorrit* or "sea" in *Dombey*) The pronounced "pervasiveness" of the major patterns, which perhaps indicates his incapacity for a single symbol shooting its impact throughout the novel (like Forster's "echo" in *A Passage to India*), partly shows only the Dickensian manner of establishing a thing (like his repetitive style in narration.) Then, there is a certain disarray in his images. There are plenty of inert figures in the patterns, which are not images at all but just background-illuminations or casual mentions (seen especially in, say, "candle" or "fire" which are natural parts of the *locale* of Dickens's novels.)

However, these are not faults. As we have already seen in the localized descriptions or in the interweaving patterns, this overplus of imagination, the odd ends left out by his images and symbols, is typical of Dickens's art. They renew our impression about Dickens being an excessively creative and vitalized novelist. Distinguished from the concentrated design of "modern" artists, his is rather a diffuse pattern (but pattern still), structural as well as imagistic, which has its own aesthetic value as the reflection of life's *totality*. Dickens's images and symbols, therefore, prove themselves to be a necessary part of his poetic-fictional art as imaginative parallels to the lush vitality of fact and character in his novels. ⁹

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3. "Pickwick, Dickens and the Art of Fiction", *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, p. 38.
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5. *Rhythm in the Novel*, University of Toronto Press, reprint, 1957, p. 35.
6. Of the various discussions of the two images especial mention should be made of Robert Morse's brief but illuminating comments in "Our Mutual Friend", *The Dickens Critics*, ed. George H. Ford and Lauriat Lane, Jr., New York, 1963, pp. 205-06.
7. Introduction to *Little Dorrit*, *New Oxford Illustrated Dickens*, p. vi.

8. See the reprint of the front cover and its description in John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson, *Dickens at Work*, London 1957, facing p. 225 and p. 226, respectively.

9. Some other representative instances of Dickens's images and symbols which I have not been able to incorporate in the essay, are as follows :—

David Copperfield : "Sea" *Bleak House* : the well-known "fog" with "rain" ; *Hard Times* : "grime-and-dust" ; *Little Dorrit* : "Watch-and-clock" ; *A Tale of Two Cities* : "dust", "light" ; *Great Expectations* : "leg-iron", "money" (not as theme but in actual form) ; *Our Mutual Friend* : "dust-mound" ; *Edwin Drood* : "fog".

THE ADULT WORLD OF 'DOMBEY AND SON'

SHANTA MAHALANOBIS

IN recent years there have been commendable efforts to retrieve '*Dombey and son*' from Swinburne's string of critical negatives :—

"There is nothing of a story and all that : nothing (to borrow from Martial) is bad...the story of Dombey has no plot and that a very stupid one. The struttingly offensive father and his gushingly submissive daughter are failures of the first magnitude."¹

Most contemporary criticism effectively refutes this insensitive denial of Dickens' insights as a novelist in '*Dombey and Son*'. Kathleen Tillotson and J. Hillis Miller are agreed on the unity of action, design, feeling and theme in this novel,

"The relation between Mr. Dombey and Florence is the backbone of the whole book ; structurally the relation between him and Paul, and that between Florence and Paul are only means of exposing and developing it."²

Angus Wilson, in "The World of Charles Dickens"(1970) endorses "a great advance in his (Dickens') art in this novel", reflected particularly in his

"proper concern for people as human and not as units in a journalistic joke",

in his relating character to theme, and to quote Tillotson again in "the interaction of characters."³

'*Dombey and Son*' has therefore been admitted to the status of an artistically mature novel in the Dickens canon. Written during a period of personal restlessness, travel and multifarious exacting commitments as author and editor, it expresses a compulsive need for an adequate artistic equivalent for the writer's disturbing inner experiences. In Europe, Dickens found the stress of writing '*Dombey and Son*' unendurable without the complement of 'streets', particularly those London streets and walks between Hungerford Stairs and Camden Town where he had walked and lounged during the blacking-factory period of his life.

"It was to these scenes with all their load of misery, resentment and shame that Dickens returned again and again in his writing, and it was

through those self-same streets that he felt urged to walk during the 'Dombey' period—with an acuteness that he had never before known and which was steadily increasing."⁴

The painful past of his father's imprisonment and his maternal grandfather's embezzlement was returning insistently with its concomitant feelings of shame, despair and hopeless isolation. He never did recover from this early *trauma* and 'Dombey and Son' with 'the work of Dickens' whole career was an attempt to digest these early shocks and hardships, to explain them to himself, to justify himself in relation to them, to give an intelligible and tolerable picture of a world in which such things could occur."⁵

The childhood of Florence, Dombey's daughter, was one of his earliest attempts at artistically objectifying these "early shocks and hardships", of understanding and controlling the desolate early experience of separation from his family and estrangement from the fireside hearth. And it is, perhaps, as a sympathetic study of deprived childhood, that 'Dombey and Son' has won most critical acclaim, second only to the later novel, 'David Copperfield'. The further theme of alienated childhood in the diminutive six-year old Paul Dombey, is also artistically significant.

Paul is subjected to the 'forcing' methods of Mrs. Pipchin's and Doctor Blimber's reputed educational establishments preparatory to his partnership in the House of Dombey and Son at the ripe age of sixteen. Ironically, this exclusive education, a proud and hopeful parent's gift of love, starves his sickly childhood of the sustaining warmth of human love. Latin and mathematical principles are exhausting substitutes. So he lived in a solitary world of musing fancy and

"No one understood him. Mrs. Blimber thought him 'odd' and sometimes the servants said among themselves that little Dombey 'moped', but that was all."⁶

The centrality therefore of the parent-child relationship in the thematic structure of this novel is incontrovertible, and one cannot quarrel with the amply justified view of 'Dombey and Son' as a novel pleading for children among other things,

"generally for their right to be treated as individuals instead of appendages and hindrances to parental ambition and particularly against the wrongs done to them in the name of education."⁷

But there is little here of the psychological and moral complexity and the author's sensitive handling of it that is a necessary condition of an artistically nature novel. For the dichotomies and ambiguities of the adult world of Dombey, Edith, Carker and Cousin Feenix ; the inevitable interaction of characters ; social moves contending with straining individuality ;

the deliberate erosion of human norms, engage the author's finest and subtlest insights and evince full control of his medium. These, rather than the theme of childhood reveals Dickens' artistic maturity. The contradiction in Dombey's human contacts are implicit in Dickens' restrained rendering of his attitudes. His determined evasion of parental affection for his daughter derives from a peculiar complex of emotional self-distrust and emotional starvation. His arrogant egotism needs to be bolstered with the love and assurance of only such as would heighten and maintain the dignity of the House of Dombey and Son. A wife and son are indispensable in this role, a daughter totally irrelevant. He makes exacting demands on Paul and Edith, silently resenting or openly resisting the slightest evidence in them and in his first wife, of a will apart from his, of diverted affection.

"The last time he had seen his slighted child, there had been that in the sad embrace between her and her dying mother, which was at once a revelation and a reproach to him. Let him be absorbed as he would in the Son on whom he built such high hopes, he could not forget that closing scene. He could not forget that he had had no part in it."⁸

Nor could he erase the painful, jealous memory of his son's closer intimacy with Florence, of Edith's unselfish devotion to Florence, of Florence herself naturally and effortlessly winning the love that was his by right. Dickens repeatedly shows him at the door of his sanctum, in the midnight hours, hit by his own inadequacy as he gazes longingly upstairs at Florence gently crooning to the ailing Paul in her arms, or at Edith's glowing, tender look, washed clean of haughty disdain, as she leaves Florence's room. He retires behind the brittle and pitiful facade of a cold, fixed, unmoved demeanour.

"He might have been hung up for sale at a Russian fair as a specimen of a frozen gentleman,"⁹ with whom "outward tokens of feeling were unusual." The jarring and discordant string within him is cruelly suppressed and hidden especially from Florence's instinctive perceptions. He is reluctant to admit it even to himself, though he burns with a consuming envy at Florence's effortless transmutations of Edith's hard, cold, proud arrogance into an eager human warmth for herself.

"As she sat down by the side of Florence, she stooped and kissed her hand. He hardly knew his wife; she was so changed. It was not merely that her smile was new to him—though that he had never seen; but her manner, the tone of her voice, the light of her eyes, the interest and confidence and winning will to please, expressed in all—this was not Edith."¹⁰

Florence is usually seen as the object of active cruelty or of love. In her own feelings, she is will-lessly passive and contrasts unfavourably with her sharply wilful, self-assertive father, who meets his match in the unbending Edith.

"A marble rock could not have stood more obdurately in his way than she."¹¹

Repeatedly thwarted by Edith's wilful resistance he is driven to more aggressive forms of self-assertion. To her defiant

"I will do nothing that you ask",
he unpleasantly retorts,

"I am not accustomed to ask Mrs. Dombey". "I direct."

Yet Dickens, intending to identify Florence with the force of human love, the novel's apparently strongest positive, makes her more powerful than Dombey in her very will-lessness. With Edith, as with Paul, she triumphs where he loses

"Again, his neglected child at this rough passage of his life, put forth by even this rebellious woman as powerful where he was powerless, and everything where he was nothing."¹²

In *Dombey*, Dickens presents a determined and sustained effort at emotional self-denial, until little by little, more and more the wall of pride crumbles and in his total rejection by his son, his wife, his flattering friend and his riches, he feels an urgent need to love and be loved by his one true friend, his daughter. And yet, his habit of pride was so deeply ingrained that

"If he could have seen her in the street, and she had done more than look at him as she had been used to look, he would have passed on with his old cold unforgiving face and not addressed her or relaxed it, though his heart should have broken soon afterwards."¹³

Julian Moynahan acutely perceives his complexity

"In *Dombey*, Dickens created a permanently valid image of 19th century Economic Man in all the unyielding pride of his power and the pathos and repulsiveness of his blighted heart."¹⁴

Wholly conditioned by the 19th century money ethic, he has his exclusive standards of decency, honour, success. Morfin, the junior Manager, pays him the tribute of "high honour and integrity". But it never occurs to him to question the narrowness of these standards, their contracting effect on human sympathies, their erosion of human sensibilities. He sees nothing wrong in contracting a mercenary marriage like just another of his 'business' bargains, in callously manipulating human lives. The elder Carker and Walter Gay are indifferently victimised. His human relations are dehumanised by the formidable pressures of materialism. In fact,

Dickens is seen at his most mature in his socio-psychological handling of Dombey, in contrast to his conventional treatment of the idealised, oversimplified Florence.

In thus allowing public pressures and the failures of "private life to overrun his 'business' novel" and so deviating from his original plan of stressing the relationship between a businessman and his daughter, Dickens seems to intend a more complex vision of the precariously balanced public and personal lives of individuals exposed to the inhuman pressures of modern capitalism. Dombey's split consciousness of emotional deprivation and threatened business prestige is contained in his final acrimonious quarrel with his second wife. His persistent efforts at alienating Edith from Florence, and holding Florence hostage for Edith's good behaviour, suggest the human envy of an inadequate man.

"It is not the rule of my life to allow myself to be thwarted by anybody—anybody, Carker—or to suffer anybody to be paraded as a stronger motive for obedience in those who owes obedience to me than I am myself."¹⁵

His motives are jealously personal here. But his fears of public humiliation in the City are as intense.

"Good heaven, Mrs. Dombey!" said her husband, with supreme amazement, 'do you imagine it possible that I could ever listen to such a proposition? Do you know who I am, madam? Do you know what I represent? Did you ever hear of Dombey and Son? People to say that Mr. Dombey—Mr. Dombey! was separated from his wife! Common people to talk of Mr. Dombey and his domestic affairs!' Do you seriously think, Mrs. Dombey that I would permit my name to be handed about in such connection."¹⁶

This arrogant stance fails to suppress his growing sense of the powerlessness of material status. His perplexity and alarm at Paul's distrust of the money ethic changes to doubting uncertainty at Edith's contempt for wealth.

"She lifted her hand to the tiara of bright jewels radiant on her head, and plucking it off with a force that dragged and strained her rich black hair with heedless cruelty, and brought it tumbling on her shoulders, cast the gems upon the ground. From each arm she unclasped a diamond bracelet, flung it down, and trod upon the glittering heap. Without a word, without a shadow on the fire of her bright eye, without abatement of her awful smile, she looked on Mr. Dombey to the last, in moving to the door and left him."¹⁸

It is a self-redeeming act that frees her from the intolerable, though self-imposed degradation of a mercenary marriage and leaves

Dombey unsure of his material values Carker's treacherous betrayal of the Dombeyan scale of values in the world of personal and business relations also irrevocably undermines Dombey's faith in the money ethic. The deceptiveness of 'honour', 'fear', 'admiration', 'power' and 'glory' is exposed. Broken by the financial collapse of *Dombey and Son*, humiliated by his "domestic shame", he at last recognises "his false grounds of pride."¹⁹

Dickens' mature handling of the dehumanised Dombey's slow growth into moral and human sensitivity lends greater conviction to the novel than the contrived effects of Dombey's reformed rehabilitation. He is reduced to a state of maudlin sentimentality as a precondition of his reconciliation with Florence. This is artistically unconvincing as Julian Moynahan successfully establishes.

"Before his collapse Dombey inhabits a world of power, a world where hard, practical intelligence and will have run wild, issuing in spectacular inventions line the railroad in spectacularly predatory careers like Carker's. This is a tensely masculine world, a society of hearts without heads. Dickens' attempted solution of this cultural impasse merely perpetuates it. Dombey moves from hardness through debility to a maundering, guilt-ridden submission to feminine softness."²⁰

Besides, Florence in her role of untainted, forgiving innocence, is not entirely credible. Her very perfection is suspect. Even the ups and downs of her romance with Walter Gay are invested with a fairy-tale aura and never develop into real tensions. Lacking in an intelligent, critical response to human relationships, she is merely baffled by her glimpses of human corruption in Mrs. Skewton, (Edith's mother), and Carker. She stands as her father's angelic saviour contending with 'a human soul', who is 'struggling to resist an overpowering call to be saved.'²¹

Set against this theme of unflawed childhood simplicity, the subtly motivated morally stained Dombey-Edith-Carker web of relationships have a permanent credibility, assume strikingly adult proportions. The over-simplifications of Dombey's purely structural evaluation become obvious.

"The marriage between Dombey and Edith which takes place exactly halfway through the book, comes to dominate it. This marriage is Dombey's nemesis and accomplishes his fall; it destroys the villain Carker, it drives Florence out of the Dombey house and makes possible her marriage to Walter. More emphatically than Dombey's relation with his daughter, it dramatizes the folly of allowing one's approach to the people around one to be controlled by the consciousness of one's wealth and grandeur."²²

Dabney makes no reference to the violent emotional and moral tensions released by this marriage, nor to the powers of clinical self-criticism it rouses in Edith. She sets Florence as a new alter-ego to her flawed self, to her own warped childhood "taught to scheme and plot when children play"²³, the perverting of her "natural heart" "to amuse the leisure of a world of mothers."²⁴

"Oh mother, mother, if you had but left me to my natural heart when I too was a girl—a younger girl than Florence—how different I might have been."²⁵

Her revulsion from her sordid youth exposed to the subtle manoeuvrings of adult guile finds forceful expression in her direct confrontations with her mother,

"I was a woman—artful, designing, mercenary, laying snares for men—before I knew myself, or you, or even understood the base and wretched aim of every new display I learnt. You gave birth to a woman".²⁶

She is fearful for Florence. She warns her mother against using the same base arts on Florence to defile her original virtue.

"Leave her alone. She shall not, while I can interpose, be tampered with and tainted by the lessons I have learnt"²⁷

Florence's literary validity here as with Dombey, is therefore to be found only with reference to her impact on vibrant adult tensions. She exists for Edith, as an inviolable pure ideal in a world of moral ambiguities, and saves her tormented spirit from total despair. The mere fact of what she is, melts Edith's petrified human feelings. Florence's gentle touch

"was like the *prophet's rod* of old upon the rock. Her tears sprang forth beneath it, as she sank upon her knees and laid her aching head and streaming hair upon the pillow by its side."²⁸

Edith's "woman's soul of love and tenderness" is poured out for Florence alone. Unsparing in her honesty, she admits her love for Florence as the only bond between herself and her estranged husband, a bond that Dombey had earlier denied in his denial of Florence's love. There is no hint of an inadequately motivated repentance in Dickens' portrayal of Edith, no hypocritical sympathy for the misfortunes of her husband. Incapable of self-excuses or self-reproaches for her compromising flight with the insidiously evil Carker, she retains her mature dignity to the very end and relentlessly discriminates between the 'dark vision' of an adult world of dehumanised egotism and the love and humanity embodied in Florence. There is no falsity in her recognition of her regard for Florence and Dombey's newly found love for Florence, as the only alleviating forces in her desolate future, helping her towards the generosity of

tolerance and forgiveness. Her positives are not facile. Nor are they suddenly and easily achieved. They bear the whole weight of the tortured realisation of a convulsed and agonised personality.

"When he loves his Florence most he will have me least. When he is most proud and happy in her and her children, he will be most repentant of his own part in the dark vision of our married life. At that time I will be repentant too—let him know it then—and think that when I thought so much of all the causes that had made me what I was, I needed to have allowed more for the causes that had made him what he was. I will try then to forgive him his share of blame. Let him try to forgive me mine."²⁹

Such internal evidence of Dickens sensitive enactment of Edith's anguished moments of self-realisation is confirmed by comparison with Henry James' enactment of the subtlest nuances of Charlotte Verver's guilt-ridden soul in the "*The Golden Bowl*". Totally unlike in their motivations Edith and Charlotte share a passionate vitality and show a like degree of moral irresponsibility in their marriages of convenience. Their courses are different. Charlotte moves from a selfish amoral deviousness which sacrifices every human consideration to her 'grande passion' for the Prince, Maggie's husband and her own 'inamorata', towards a painfully slow moral awareness of her vile treachery. She and her lover employ the most subtle sophistry to justify their delicately insinuated adultery. Married to Maggie's father, she and the Prince describe themselves as outsiders in the mutually exclusive and tender father-daughter relationship. The moral ambiguity of the passionate kiss with which they seal the pledge of their loyalty and tenderness for the Ververs, is self-evident

"with a violence that had sighed itself the next moment to the longest and deepest of stillnesses, they passionately sealed their pledge."³⁰

But Charlotte's superb poise gradually cracks under the pressure of Maggie's quiet knowledge of her guilt, and the growing sense of her monstrous disregard of her husband's decency and goodness. Just the slightest quaver in her voice betrays her inner turmoil in the final Gallery scene 'like the shriek of a soul in pain.' James *feels into* the situation and renders it in the nervously intense language of emotional involvement, already used by Dickens in Edith's repeated recoils from her self-debasement. 'A terrible tremble' creeps up Edith's 'whole frame' as she consents to her purchase by Dombey with the 'power of his money.'³¹ She shrinks and slouches in utter shame as she takes the vengeful step of fleeing from the Dombey house to join Carker.

"Mamma !" said Florence.

'Don't call me by that name ! Don't speak to me ! Don't look at me !—Florence !' shrinking back as Florence moved a step towards her, 'don't touch me !'

As Florence stood transfixed before the haggard face and staring eyes, "she noted, as in a dream, that Edith spread her hands over them and shuddering through all her form, and crouching down against the wall crawled by her like some lower animal, sprang up, and fled away."⁸²

The slinking 'animal' metaphor achieves a piled-up effect of disgust and revulsion. It also exposes by contrast Florence's passive bewilderment. She hovers helplessly and ineffectively on the periphery of adult confrontations and dichotomies unable to understand or to act. Her glimpse of Carker's stealthy departure from their house after his secret and fateful visit to Edith, makes her blood run cold, paralyses her physically and fills her with dread.

"She went quickly to her own room and locked her door ; but even then, shut in with her dog beside her, felt a chill sensation of horror, as if there were danger brooding somewhere near her."⁸³

This pitifully childish act of physically excluding a pervasive evil, is typical of Florence. It qualifies her claim to moral goodness and makes her less acceptable as a positive than the innocent but perceptive Maggie Verver in Henry James's "*The Golden Bowl*". The victim of unscrupulous schemers, Maggie struggles spiritedly to comprehend and master the evil they release. Her 'awfully quaint' moral fineness initiates itself into the knowledge of emotional ruthlessness, and confronts its diplomacy with the strength of her self-reliant will and her assured love for her husband and father. It enables her to act and restore complex human relationships to the rounded perfection of

"the bowl with all our happiness in it. The bowl without the crack."⁸⁴ But not before she has suffered and been enriched by it. She gains a mature human insight, unknown to Florence.

"Everything is terrible, cara—in the heart of man," she tells her husband. Florence's admonitions of repentance and forgiveness to the proud, unrepentant Edith, seem juvenile by comparison. For James in "*The Golden Bowl*" renders a completely adult world of sophisticated thinking confounded by the morality of mature human insights. Dickens' rendering of the dehumanised adult milieu of *Dombey and Son*, compares favourably with 'James', but his portrayal of childhood positives is too facile to carry any moral weights, childhood values then merely function as foils in an ambivalent adult milieu in *Dombey and Son*. Even the idiom of their rendering is insipid by contrast. Besides, Paul and Florence suffer from a loss of individuality. They carry the overtones of Nell, Oliver and

David and are placed as typically Victorian in their suffering virtue. They are static.

"Things happen to Mr. Pecksniff, to Little Nell, to Mr. Micawber, to Mr. Dombey, to Bradley Headstone and Eugene Wraybourne, to Sally Brass and her brother: but *as the rule*, these things do not happen *within them*, as such things happen in the soul of any protagonists in a novel by Tolstoy or Dostoevsky, or as they are intended and traced as happening (say) in '*Romola*.' Dombey's conversion is a mere stage-trick, and for Micawber's apotheosis as a prosperous colonist, let him believe it who will."⁸⁵

Edith Dombey, I feel, is an exception to this rule. Dickens draws her from the inside and enacts her savage struggle for moral and human identity in an ossified, amoral adult milieu, in trenchantly, incisive prose. There is no trace of the reiterative and stagey in the corrosive bitterness of

"There is no slave in a market, no horse in a fair, so shown and offered and examined and paraded, Mother, as I have been for ten shameful years."⁸⁶

Nor is her contempt for her own involvement in a rapacious middle-class scale of values, less vitriolic in her confrontations with her mother:

"But my education was completed long ago. I am too old now, and have fallen too low, by degrees, to take a new course, and to stop yours and to help myself. The germ of all that purifies a woman's breast, and makes it true and good, has never stirred in mine, and I have nothing else to sustain me when I despise myself.

So as we are genteel and poor, I am content that we should be wade rich by these means; all I can say is, I have kept the only purpose I have had the strength to form—I had almost said the power, with you at my side, Mother—and have not tempted this man on."⁸⁷

There is a frantic urge to salvage the residue of her moral integrity even when she sells herself to the highest bidder in the marriage market, in disdainful deference to the pressures of her social milieu. Dabney ignores the very real force of these Regency pressures when he detects a note of 'falseness' in Edith's willingness to enter a marriage bargain she recognises as morally degrading. He cannot reconcile it with her

"will, passion, pride and analytical understanding of her position."⁸⁸

Yet Trevelyan firmly establishes these pressures as a powerful social reality,

"For the yearly Victorian 'lady' and her mother of the Regency period, too often had nothing in the world to do but to be paid for and approved by man, and to realise the type of female perfection which the breadwinner of the family expected to find in his wife and daughters."⁸⁹

It encages and constricts Edith driving her to the desperation of Carker's imprisoned parrot that

"twisted and pulled at the wires of its cage with its crooked beak and crawled up to the dome, and along its roof like a fly, and down again head foremost and shook and bit, and rattled at every slender bar."⁴⁰

The artistic mastery of this pulsating parrot metaphor is only surpassed by Dickens' sardonic use of the phoenix metaphor in demolishing the septuagenarian Cleopatra's (Mrs. Skewton), incongruously facade,

"The maid who should have been a skeleton then re-appeared and giving one arm to her mistress, who appeared to have taken off her manner with her flannel gown, collected the ashes of Cleopatra and carried them away in the other, ready for tomorrow's revivification."⁴¹

In presenting this horrible, masquerade of pretense in Mrs. Skewton and of fawning parasitism in the bloated Major Bagstock, Dickens creates a rare piece of 'macabre grotesquerie'. The implications are plain of a milieu infected with 'imbalances and perversions which disrupt the natural processes of human life and civilisation.'⁴²

Angus Wilson stresses its topical interest as a specific and "most frightening attack upon worldly values embodied in Regency manners."⁴³ But Dickens' caricature of monstrously deceitful self-interest travestying every decent feeling, has a much wider human relevance. It embodies a permanent onslaught on the fraudulent self-seeking egotism, the mental and moral deformity of a commercialised ethos. For grotesque caricature, as Barbara Hardy pertinently points out, is one of Dickens' chief means of depicting evil,

"which we can perhaps roughly but not too inaccurately describe as nature corrupted and deformed."⁴⁴

Though Dickens successfully translates every single nuance of this moral chicanery into details of language, gesture and clothing *Dombey and Son* does not leave an overall impression of moral debility. The prevailing mood of nightmarish 'gloom and horror' undoubtedly gives the novel its colouring,⁴⁵ and accounts for the weirdly human animation of inanimate objects,

"candelabra, gnarled and inter-twisted, like the branches of trees, or horns of animals stuck out from the panels of the wall," in tune with the emotional contortions of Edith's attempted seduction. And horror, so intensely realised, is undisputed by the tepid positive of the much-maligned virtue of love in Florence and such peripheral characters as Miss Tox, Polly Toodles, and John and Harriet Carker. Their immunity to every form of human cruelty, is too consistent to be credible. They have no hesitations, no moral confusions. Their notions of good and evil are

unbelievably simple. Their passive, will-less endurance is quite eclipsed by Edith's determined search for human values through a labyrinth of conflicting human motives. The recurring scenes of Florence and Miss Tox lost in the maze of London streets, have their symbolic relevance only in this context. Edith's disregard of conventional mores and moral definitions, makes her search strained and difficult. The expensive experiments of her marriage to Dombey and her flight with Carker teach her to discriminate between wrong and right for themselves, because, as Cousin Feenix says, it *is* wrong and not right, and not for extraneous considerations of family honour and fame. Her agonizingly painful progress through pride, resentment, hatred, self-flagellation, to a mature and human tolerance of emotional inadequacy in others, shares of the permanent human verities. This is not to deny Angus Wilson's fine perception of the innate goodness of Dickens' semi-idiot, Mr. Toots and Cousin Feenix.

"Mr. Toots and Cousin Feenix are a very important step forward in Dickens' embodiment in fiction of his belief in the greater importance of the heart than of the head. With them he succeeds entirely where Dostoevsky was less secure—in making us respect them for this, because their absurdity sets them off against the calculating mean society which the author is attacking."

But in Edith Dombey one senses the finer goodness achieved through disturbing adult experiences. This, if any, is the most convincing moral positive in Dickens' *Dombey and Son*, outweighing the simplified, sheltered moral absolutes stated in Florence. It is fully realised and is a decided advance on the stated ethics of Dickens' earlier novels. It is Dickens' first successful rendering of adult complexity.

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A POST-COLONIAL PERSPECTIVE ON DICKENS AND SOCIETY

SAJNI KRIPALANI

*La dame n'était pas seule
Elle avait un mari
Un mari tiès comme il faut
Qui citait Racine et Corneille
Et Voltaire et Rousseau
Et le Père Hugo et le jenne Musset
Et gide et Valéry
Et tant d'autres encores.*

René Despestre : Face à la Nuit

The quotation from René Despestre's poem lends much point to Tanou's indictment of the need of the native intellectual to bind his intelligence as closely as possible to that of the colonising power. For those of us who *deal* in English literature in India, it forms part of a particularly uncomfortable chapter in "The Wretched of the Earth".¹

Teaching Wordsworth's "Daffodils" *ad nauseam* to successive generations of unbelieving or too-much believing listeners is often so blatantly futile, that I, for one, always turn with tremendous relief to Dickens, for he, perhaps more than any nineteenth-century Englishman, actually practised in his writings, the dictum of "*Homo Sum : humani nihil a me alienum puto*"² : increasingly, I find that the resulting near-comprehensive sweep of his teeming urban canvas, presents situations, social attitudes and institutions which are as relevant to twentieth-century India as they were to Victorian England.

Humphrey House, that excellent *sociological* critic of Dickens, noticed this when he found himself teaching Dickens in India, and we can see ample evidence of it reading between the lines of his book. The connection is speedily established when we come across the background of squalid industrial slums and such sharply jolting observations as : 'There was an actual class war, but there was the possibility of cholera too'.³ A cartoon of this, 'pestilence that walketh in darkness', in a more recent and profusely illustrated work,⁴ there is frighteningly relevant, for instance, to Bengal in the summer months, even in the nineteen seventies.

In a casual essay called "Pardiggism" Verrier Elwin condemned the 'coolth' of

"organised charity, scrimped and iced,

In the name of a cautious, statistical Christ",

so prevalent in the west and with the anthropologist's intuitive perception pointed out how rapidly and dangerously it was catching on in India where it is sometimes incongruous.⁵ I propose to make a case-study of attitudes to charity both in India and in England and examine the results of a set of attitudes or institutions transplanted from one soil to another.

I start with what must I think have been a typical nineteenth century attitude to the 'Poor' because it appears in "Chambers' Information for the People" for 1842 :

"In all stages of society there has existed a class, emphatically termed *the Poor*, composed of persons who, but for the charity of their neighbours, would be nearly or totally destitute, being themselves unable, or all but unable, to supply their own wants. It is easy to see how this has been and must be ; far from accidents in the operation of natural laws presiding over the birth of individuals, some come into the world without the usual gifts of body and mind required for obtaining a sufficient subsistence, the accidents of life deprive others of the use of their full powers ; many reach an infirm old age, without having laid up a store to help them over it ; the consequences of vice and error—of all these from which no one is altogether safe—leave many in a helpless state ; finally, in the imperfection of all political institutions, there are circumstances which press severely upon classes and persons, tending to make their own efforts for their subsistence insufficient. The operation of accidents upon one class of parents, and the vices and neglect of others, likewise leave many young and helpless children in a state in which they would be destitute but for the aid of neighbours. All of these causes being inherent in human nature and in society, we may be assured that 'the poor we shall have with us always', however it may be possible, by judicious and humane efforts; to keep their numbers within comparatively moderate bounds." ⁶

The Biblical quotation, complacently corrupted and often cited out of context by budding Victorian Malthusians, is taken from the Gospel according to St. John, when Judas's objection to Mary's use of an expensive ointment to annoint His feet instead of giving the three hundred pence to the poor, is quickly over-ruled by Christ :

".....Let her alone : against the day of my burying hath she kept this :
"For the poor always ye have with you ; but me ye have not always."'
This corruption of the Bible was ubiquitous. Typically, Dickens, with

his flair for character, puts it into the mouth of that pig-headed pompous marine insurance-man John Podsnap who "was sensible of its being required of him to take Providence under his protection. Consequently he always knew exactly what Providence meant.....it was very remarkable (and must have been very comfortable) that what Providence meant, was invariably what Mr. Podsnap meant."⁸

A more analytical, less complacent viewpoint also existed and House quotes a piece from a contemporary (1845) article in the *Westminster Review*, mouthpiece of the Philosophical Radicals :

"*Charity*,—in various forms, in one or other of its multiplied disguises, —seems to be the only panacea which occurs to the Great ; especially the well-meaning Great of our metropolis. One party advocates a more liberal poor-law ; another, shorter hours of labour to be enforced by law. In the view of some, *allotments* are the one thing needful, while Young England suggests alms-giving in the magnificent and haughty style of the feudal ages ; and Lord Ashley commits his latest solecism, in getting up a society for the protection of Distressed Needlewoman. The same vulgar, shallow aristocratic error runs through all. Everyone thinks of *relieving*, no one of *removing*, the mischief. The prevailing idea...to give benefits to an inferior, not to do justice to a fellow man... we are weary of this cuckoo-cry—*always charity, never justice ; always the open purse, never the equal measure.*"⁹ One very much fears this was a voice in the wilderness.

Dickens did not merely abuse directly the practitioners of this brand of charity. He uses in his novels, the technique of the really effective cartoonist—that of the *caricature*, the charged or loaded portrait. The most lively of these portraits always combines a relaxed scrawl with the weapon of irony and leaves, like the best cartoons a lively impression on the mind of the reader.¹⁰ Mrs. Pardiggle, for instance, who 'seemed to come into the room like cold weather', is described by Esther, with a few swift and devastating strokes : 'a formidable style of lady, with spectacles, a prominent nose, and a loud voice, who had the effect of wanting a great deal of room.' She always spoke 'in the same demonstrative, loud, hard tone, so her voice impressed my fancy as if it had a sort of spectacles on too—and I may take the opportunity of remarking that her spectacles were made the less engaging by her eyes being what Ada called 'choking eyes' meaning very prominent.'¹¹ Elsewhere, the irony is somewhat milder but equally effective, as with the Reverend Luke Honeythunder : as if the oxymoron in his name were not enough of a danger signal to arouse the reader's suspicion instantaneously, he writes some really pompous letters from his "Heaven of Philanthropy."¹² Sir Joseph

Bowley and his lady in the *The Chimes* and Mrs. Jellyby in *Bleak House* are others belonging to this populous tribe of violent philanthropists.

The portraits of their victims are unhappily, not equally effective, because they are also the victims of Dickens's *penchant* for sentimentality, and as a result they often lose the sympathy of the twentieth century reader. Betty Higden, for instance, 'with her bright eyes and her hopeful speech', starts out with a spirited resistance to the workhouse and all it stands for, but the tear jerker use of the Poorhouse idiom as her end approaches, smacks of melodrama that the sophisticated twentieth century reader cannot stomach :

" but she heard the tender river whispering to many like herself, 'Come to me, come to me! when the cruel shame and terror you have so long fled from, most beset you, come to me. I am the Relieving Officer appointed by eternal ordinance to do my work; I am not held in estimation according as I shirk it. My breast is softer than the pauper-nurse's; death in my arms is peacefuller than among the pauper wards. Come to me!' " ¹⁸ though it would doubtless appeal to certain Hindi film-goers here. Among these victims is the brickmaker, recipient of Mrs. Paigdiggle's most revolting brand of charity and he is rather more lively : 'I wants an end of these liberties took with my place.'

The genuine, non-egoistical benevolent who people Dickens's novels are even more uninspiring with the brothers Cheeryble (Nicholas Nickleby) or Mr. Brownlow (Oliver Twist), Dickens's cartoonist trick does not work because the 'good guy' cartoon must have a vitality of its own as in the Moomin or Peanuts type. Dickens's Victorian 'good guys', though benign, are equable, faceless and thoroughly dispensable.

Dickens's disgust for organised charity was only partial. A glance at his speeches will show that he was very much of his age, in that he actively supported fund-raising drives for a host of charities, believing that organised or institutional benevolence was all right if "discreet and impartial". In his views too, he contributed to the prejudices and prescriptions of his age and we would be mistaken if we looked for a really progressive force in Dickens. In an 1853 report on the activities of a "Home for Fallen Women" for instance, he says :

" When the House had been opened for some time, it was resolved to adopt a modification of Captain Macconnochie's mark system : so arranging the mark table as to render it difficult for a girl to lose marks under any one of its heads, without also losing under nearly all the others. The mark table is divided into the nine following heads. Truthfulness, Industry, Temper, Propriety of Conduct and Conversation, Temperance, Order, Punctuality, Economy, Cleanliness ... a girl declaring that

she wishes to leave, is not allowed to do so hastily, but is locked in a chamber by herself, to consider of it until next day ; when if she still persist, she is formally discharged." ¹⁴ While we are with Tolstoi's Anna, there is a willing suspension of any kind of moral judgement or sentiment on both the author's part and the reader's : Dickens contributed to both, hence the wooden and stagy quality of figures such as Martha (David Copperfield), Lelian (The Chimes) and Nancy (Oliver Twist).

It is possible to trace the history of the growth of institutional charity. In fact, the etymology of the word is in itself an indication of this history. From being the most noble of the abiding virtues, it already needed re-defining in the harsh medieval world, where the theoretical concept helped to some extent in melting down the barrier of hostility between the classes. Langland, the stern moralist attempted to re-establish the innocence of charity and its connection with love : Charity, said Amma to Long Will ;

"...re chaffereth noughte, re challengeth, re craveth.
As proude of a peny, as of a pound of golde,
And is as glatte of a gowne of a gray russet
As of a tunicle of tarse, or of trye scarlet.
He is glatte with alle glatte, and good tyl alle wykked,
And leueth and loueth alle that owre lorde made." ¹⁵

Both Langland and Chaucer establish a kind of mystique about the figure of the ploughman, who by the honesty of his labour has an intuitive perception of the truth and is, therefore, a specially endowed spiritual being.

Gradually, with the greater institutionalisation of the Church, and as the problem of the poor became larger than the parish could cope with, we notice that Charity was given a new official direction especially after the onslaught of Puritanism. Donne, at this point felt called up to issue a warning "Heaven is not to be had in exchange for a hospital or a chantry or a college erected in thy last will." ¹⁶ By the end of that century the original concept of charity was totally unfashionable and it had taken on a frankly pragmatic and 'secular' tone, with an insurance premium quality about it : "discreet hospitality assists very much towards governing the nation, for the people are led by the mouth with moderate management, and without a little popularity they are perfect mules and ungovernable." ¹⁷ The lady who said this was obviously a forerunner, though a rather frank one, of the rather self-centred Pardigglists who ran the various ladies' charitable societies so scathingly caricatured in *Sketches by Boz*. Villainage had ceased, the middle classes had grown up

and developed a set of values that rated Humanitarianism of this obvious organised kind highly.

A different picture emerges in India. Not that charity does not exist. In fact a description of Bharat Varsha in the Vishnu Purana says "there also gifts are bestowed for the sake of the other world."¹⁸ As early as the Vedic period *dana* and the merit of the giver are emphasised :

"May the splendour of the giver be foremost."¹⁹ It was primarily a religious obligation, but self-conscious alms-giving from the well-to-do to the needy and the poor was not a part of Hinduism. A levelling occurred in that the Brahmin was the most legitimate recipient : "He who gives to a Brahmin a vessel filled with water for sipping will obtain after death, complete freedom from thirst."²⁰

Along with this basic structure of charity prompted by religious duty was a rather disorganised indigenous humanitarianism, but the British type of fashionable, organised benevolence, which Dickens both condemned and subscribed to, superimposed itself on this basic structure after the colonising of India.

Starting somewhat earlier than 1947, but gaining much strength in the urban industrial centres after that, we have much more of this charity, 'rather in the Methodistical Order', as it were. Rather like the Parish do-gooders, women with some emotional void in their lives, or men with guilty consciences, dive into 'social work' with some zeal and a great deal of self-righteousness. The charitable efforts of the branches of the international 'service' organisations certainly belong in this category with their large formal banquets, balls, fun-fairs (rather resembling church bazaars) and accompanying press photographers. The Cultural Centres built by the richest business magnates also belong with this category that Donne warned against, or perhaps they feel like the twelfth century king of Kanauj that the occasional *tuladana* is called for. Only a mild case of paranoia, no doubt.

Here, as in Britain in the years of the growth of fashionable Benevolence, a new and rising middle class is growing up that has the time, energy and resources necessary for a certain amount of Pardiggism. The old caste system has given way to a new and in some sense more rigid one of gradations of status. The Veneerings of *Our Mutual Friend* would be the counterparts of the upper strata of Government employees on the one hand, and commercial executives and business men on the other. It is the wives of these men, who perform the chores of Pardiggism, with the occasional excursion from the opulence with which they are surrounded, to the world of the 'other half'—wearing elegant, if suitably muted clothes, and to them, very few brickmakers can say 'I wants an

end of these liberties took with my place." Some of them 'operate' through the so-called 'international service' organisations and others through groups they have got up themselves. All of them, however, have attitudes towards slumdweller, 'the Poor', Prostitution, which are Victorian in their limited range and complete lack of imagination. Here, too, the motive is to relieve, rather than remove the causes beneath, or to look into the future of the people being so relieved. In New Delhi, at the multi-storied building site for one of national-level American philanthropic organisations, a group of such elegant women has started a tiny school for the children of the labourers working at the site, using a tin-shed erected for the purpose by the contractors. The school will last as long as the construction of the building lasts, and after that what? Will society create a niche for these only slightly educated children as they grow up? Is it just or imaginative to raise their expectations from life at an impressionable age only to have them dashed down a few years later? One might well ask. Temporary justification, I can see, lies in the nourishing gruel and the glass of milk supplied by CARE and Brothers to India to each child, each day, and so far, certainly they appear to have a trusting attitude to their benefactors, but obsequy is there too, and that can be an ugly expression on the face of a child.

In a recent article, a historian, Nilmoni Mukherjee, has described the origin and working of a nineteenth century benevolent venture in mofussil Bengal: the Uttarpura Hitakari Sabha. The article opens, in fact, with the account of ladies charitable societies in *Sketches by Boz* cited earlier. The Sabha adapted itself to local problems such as that of women's education, but the type of group operating it at its inception further illustrates the fact that the inspiration of such philanthropy is not native, but foreign, and also indicates the social stratum of the organisers:

"By the middle of the nineteenth century there had emerged a class of Bengalis who had received varying degrees of western education and had developed a new set of values. Generally rooted in the soil, they enjoyed a secure income from land under the permanent settlement or supplemented it by following the learned professions or serving the Government and the mercantile houses. This class was growing politically conscious, but their political ideas had not yet crystallized. There were no political movements and organisations which they could join. So the numerous benevolent societies were the only places where they could be articulate.

It is, however, interesting to note that these kindly thoughts seldom extended to the ryots who lived and worked in wretched condition and who formed the bulk of the population. In this respect they behaved like

the early English humanitarians who found no inconsistency in helping the poor and at the same time exploiting the factory labourers".³¹

It is this dichotomy in attitude that, one fears, continues to operate in the minds of charitable persons even today, and in this field, certainly, Dickens indicates the danger that we are heirs to.

There are other institutions which Dickens illustrates prolifically which we would do well to try and understand because their resemblance to their Indian counterparts is so striking: Parliament, for instance, for which according to House, Dickens had such a 'contemptuous distaste'.³² In Central Calcutta, there are dark, musty legal offices, where reading lamps burn by day and old men pour over dusty files throughout the day, which are Dickensian, if anything, and one might be pardoned for reacting a little like Lucie Monette when she first entered one in London. The Circumlocution Office also demands recognition here, another colonial legacy.

Dickens's own attitude to the colonies was a little like his own Major Bagshot's.³³ In one of his otherwise very attractive and moving speeches at a charitable dinner for the "Hospital for Sick Children" in 1858, he "gave the Army and Navy." He hoped, he said, it would not be incompatible with the latest fashion if he reminded the company that a large portion of the army were at this moment in India employed in punishing great treachery and great cruelty, and in upholding a government which, whatever its faults, had proved immeasurably superior to any "Asiatic rule."³⁴ Not, indeed, a man a great deal ahead of his times, but in spite of this, and perhaps in a sense, *because* of it, Dickens remains topical and illuminating for us.

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2. "I am a man: nothing that is human can be alien to me." See Terence, "Heauton Timorumenosis."
3. See House: "The Dickens World."
4. Angus Wilson: "The World of Charles Dickens."
5. Verrier Elwin: "Motley"
6. Chambers' information for the People, 1842, under the heading "Poor-Laws."
7. John XII 7-8.
8. Charles Dickens: "Our Mutual Friend."
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10. See E. H. Gombrich, 'The Cartoonists Armoury' in "Meditations on a Hobby horse."
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16. John Donne : xxvi Sermons (1660) p. 158.
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WORDSWORTH : A MAN SPEAKING TO MEN

DIPENDU CHAKRABARTY

THE situation that makes Jean-Paul Sartre say 'We no longer know—literally—for whom to write' (*What is Literature?*) is probably more tormenting than the situation that made Wordsworth ask 'What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself?' But the difference is only between the degrees of intensity and complexity. The alienation of the writer from the people, which—particularly its Augustan manifestation—was a constant source of mental agony for Wordsworth has now assumed a proportion that is almost a threat to the very identity of a poet. In an age in which the poet himself is alienated from his poetry (for the man who suffers and the mind which creates are two separate entities), poetry is read and appreciated as a structure in terms of either musical notation or mathematical equation (for Pound 'a sort of inspired mathematics which gives us...equations for human emotions'), and the reader is considered a necessary evil, we need badly someone like Wordsworth, who will remind us in plain words that the poet is a *man* (my italics), and that he is a man speaking to men.

This cannot be dismissed as a romantic obsession with the 'Poet' at the expense of his 'Poetry'. This states a truth which we can forget at our peril, and which, therefore, needs to be re-discovered from time to time, whenever a crisis, which is more than literary, confronts us. The Symbolists, the Dadaists, the Surrealists and those who share their views, have all made the poet in their different ways a nihilist in a world of nothingness. The modern formalists, the 'New Critics' and their followers have turned him into a watch-maker by cutting off the umbilical cord between him and his work, and placing all the emphasis on the highly complex mechanism of the art-object. Indeed, the de-humanisation of the poet has taken different forms at different periods. For Rimbaud the poet makes himself a 'voyant' by a 'long, immense, and planned disordering of all the senses.' For Mallarmé the poet is a singer singing to himself, but then—ultimately—the song, not the singer is what really matters. For Eliot and most of the modern poets, the poet is not a 'personality' but a particular 'medium', a mask, a persona. Strangely

enough even in the under-developed societies like ours, where social alienation of the Western kind is, by and large, an imaginary experience, poets have surrendered themselves to a similar view of the poetic personality.

At a time like ours we must remember, as Wordsworth did, that the poet is also a man, not merely because he has a personality, but because his experience, religious, political and aesthetic, is not essentially different from that of the man to whom he is communicating it. Wordsworth kept this in mind when he said that the poet is not different 'in kind from other men, but only in degree.' For ages the poet has been looked upon either as a saint or an unconscious dreamer, or an automaton, and in each case he has been de-humanised, and has suffered a disintegration of his personality as a man. In the modern age, his estrangement from the society has ultimately led to his estrangement from his own work. This duality of alienation—social and aesthetic—which is more acutely felt now than ever before is generally mistaken for an essential condition for artistic creation. The modern poet, living as he does in a non-man's land between the bourgeois philistines and the vulgar masses, has no alternative but to escape into the warm cocoon of his ego. The remnants of the idealistic tradition, still preserved by such concepts as Beauty, Eternity, Being, etc. have made him see his isolation as something unique and not as an inevitable result of the industrial class society.

Not that Wordsworth understood what man had made of man in terms of socio-economic causality. He only recognised the social nature of alienation, though he could not—and it was not possible for him, either—discover its root. His philosophy was as idealistic as that of any other romantic before or since. Even his views of poetry, which never coalesced into a system, had an idealistic veneer. But more than any other romantic, he was keenly aware of a hiatus between the two poles of communication, the poet and his audience. Coleridge had no patience for this vulgar pose of the poet who was to write 'the first genuine philosophic poem'. Lacking the philosophical apparatus of Coleridge, Wordsworth could only raise certain questions, and hardly took the trouble to pursue them in the way he was expected to do. But some of the questions he raised still have their relevance for our age; the most important of them is 'To whom does the poet address himself?'. This is a question which was cynically ignored by most of his contemporaries and his successors. But it keeps popping up sometimes, and the writer, unable to answer it, is perplexed. The XXVIII Congress of International P.E.N. devoting itself to a discussion of this question, fell into this perplexity. Wordsworth's definition of the poet as a man speaking to

men is only a bold attempt to restore between the poet and his audience the link that was severed by the so-called elite, 'people of consideration in society' in the 18th century.

The statement that the poet is a man speaking to men does not of course give us the whole image of him ; it leaves out much, but it does certainly point to something which other definitions have overlooked ; it is that by writing poetry the poet enters into a peculiar kind of relationship with others. To be a poet is to establish a new kind of contact with society through a new medium, i.e. language. In short, poetry is a peculiar kind of social communication. This seems to be what Wordsworth had in mind, and the point he made cannot be understood apart from the 18-century context in which he had to write. If he had failed to convince Coleridge or if we to-day find in his preface a confusion of critical standards, it is because he was not—nor did he wish to be one—much of a theorist. In a letter to J. A. Herand, he wrote, "I heartily regret I ever had anything to do with it [the Preface]". But that did not prevent him from seeing the fundamental problems of poetry in proper perspective : the poet as a man, the language he uses, the man he addresses. Strangely enough, what he said about them has often been repeated, though without acknowledgement, by many modern poets and critics.

Nobody today will speak slightly, as Coleridge did, of Wordsworth's attempt to write in a 'language really spoken by men'. If the poet-reader relationship is a human one, communication is possible only through the living speech of the day. T. S. Eliot says in *The Social Function of Poetry* that emotion and feeling are "best expressed in the common language of the people—that is, in the language common to all classes : the structure, the rhythm, the sound, the idiom of a language, express the personality of the people which speaks it." Wordsworth's fault was his frankness ; he clearly pointed to the social classes : 'a selection of language really used by men' meant for him 'the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society.' This statement seems to be less vague than Eliot's 'language common to all classes.' It shows that more than any other romantic Wordsworth was aware of the kind of people he wrote for. It is amusing to note that this man, who could not forget the presence of the audience, was accused of 'egotism' by Keats, the poet who cared very little for the man on the other side of the art-object.

Wordsworth's dictum does not mean that poetry should be written in rustic dialects ; it only asks the poet to recapture the vitality and the freshness of the language of the villagers. The reaction of Coleridge, for whom the religious education of the rustics was more important than

their experience, was that of a typical metaphysician. Probably Synge, who cared so much for the 'idiom of the Irish-thinking people' could understand better what Wordsworth meant. The manifesto of the Imagists (1915) aimed at doing the same thing—to use the language of common speech.

Those who have taken Wordsworth's words literally have failed to see that he did not identify the language of poetry with the language of the common people at all points. What is important is that the former's strength and life come from the latter. Since the language is the medium through which the poet is linked with his audience, the language has to be his own, without being radically different from that of the audience. For the poet has two kinds of commitment—to the language and to the people. Wordsworth surely did not state all this categorically, but his definition of the poet leads us to this conclusion. Although Wordsworth's theory and poetry, precept and practice, do not compose an organic whole his personal failure does not invalidate his theory of communication. For us, his deviation is less important than the truth we find in his views. J. K. Stephen heard two voices of Wordsworth; perhaps, there are more than two. Whatever the number of voices we detect in Wordsworth's poetry, none of them denies the presence of the man who overhears. He was aware of the fact that even when the poet is talking to himself, he needs a listener, a fact which has been denied by T. S. Eliot in his essay '*Three Voices of Poetry*.' Eliot has overlooked the fact that the poet is never alone, and that even in his soliloquies he assumes that somebody is overhearing him, just as an actor on the stage knows that his 'asides' and 'soliloquies' are meant for the audience. The Shavian character, who says that the poet talks to himself while others overhear him, will be nearer the truth if he only adds that the poet himself is aware of those who overhear.

When Wordsworth says that the poet gives us pleasure not as 'a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man' he seems to imply that the poet alone can be the 'whole man,' undisturbed by the division of labour in what is known to-day as the 'bourgeois' society. To the modern poet, who lives in a technologically advanced class society, and like all other individuals, suffers the pangs of alienation, this may appear as a romantic idealization. But he, too, feels the need of restoring the 'wholeness' of the man; but it is always a personal need for him, rarely a communal one. As a result, the modern poets write for poets or academicians, but, 'Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men.' Wordsworth wrote for men.

No book on modern poetry can begin without calling attention to the

progressive shrinking of its audience. Anthony Thwaite observes, 'As a student audience for poetry has grown, a lay audience has largely vanished' (*Contemporary English Poetry*). 'Without a public', says F. R. Leavis, 'poetry can hardly survive and the ordinary cultivated reader is ceasing to read poetry at all'. Even T. S. Eliot who wanted to rely on an elite said, 'when a civilization is healthy, the great poet will have something to say to his fellow countrymen at every level of education' (*The Social Function of Poetry*). And Sartre says, 'We have reader—but no public'.

At this point it will be interesting to describe the origin and the character of what is known as the public (Sartre's meaning is different). In the field of literature the middle-class 'public' which is determined by its purchasing capacity and best described as literary consumers is largely shaped by the publisher who acts like a middle-man between the poet and the reader. And the publisher has to compete with the owners of other mass media such as TV, film, gramophone etc. The mind of the public is conditioned by the existing production relations. Under the circumstances, the public whose taste is created by the socio-economic forces beyond their control, seem to be hardly sympathetic to the artist. The situation, in which a best-seller is always a 'masterpiece' and the value of a work of art is not more than its value as a commodity in the market, is hardly an ideal situation for the creative artist. Indeed, the philistinism of the middle-class 'public' is something one cannot get away from. This made T. S. Eliot wish to write for 'an audience which could neither read nor write' (*The Use of Poetry and the Use of criticism*). Wordsworth, too wanted to write for an audience which could neither read nor write, i. e., the 'lower classes of society.' But his performance taught him that it was not possible for a man of his class to write for them. This is again the feeling of Sartre, and since he seriously thinks of a way out of this impasse, in his book '*What is Literature ?*' He comes to the conclusion that 'the fate of literature is bound up with that of the working class'. What Sartre suggests may not be accepted by all, but everyone feels to-day that a new society is badly needed for the restoration of the bond between the poet and the people. And Wordsworth seems to have been the first poet to look upon it as a problem which cries for solution. However idealistic his distinction between the People and the Public (The Essay Supplementary to the Preface) may be.

Now, Wordsworth, it is true, did not see the problem of alienation as a social phenomenon beyond the control of the individual poet. There lies his idealistic attitude to the social evolution. His peasants and shepherds are in most cases poetic idealizations. For a Marxist, there is not much of a difference between the common reader of Johnson and

the common man of Wordsworth—both are declassed (in the economic sense) idealized figures. But judged in the context of the historical situation, Wordsworth's interest in Man (its Capital 'M' notwithstanding) inspite of his inner contradictions and his volte-face, seems to be more healthy than that of many of his contemporaries. Even when we compare him with the modern poets, even the Movement poets, who are still fighting for a larger audience, Wordsworth's attitude seems to be more sensible and more relevant in the context of the massive de-humanization of man in the technologically advanced class societies of this age.

And to-day if we the Indians want to have Wordsworth in the Tropics, it is for his balanced yet humane approach to the question of the writer-reader relationship, and not for his 'Nature', or 'Supreme Being'.

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SHAKESPEARE ON THE STAGE IN CALCUTTA

K. LAHIRI

How prophetically did Shakespeare speak through Cassius :

‘How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over,
In states unborn, and accents yet unknown.’

(*Julius Caesar* : III, i, 117-119)

In fulfilment of the prophecy the scenes of Shakespeare’s dramas are being acted in remote India after centuries and even in alien languages.

The earliest performances of Shakespeare’s dramas in the play-houses in Calcutta may be traced to the second half of the eighteenth century. By available evidences Shakespeare first appeared on Calcutta stages in 1778. That year a number of civilians of the East India Company staged *Julius Caesar* on an improvised stage in Calcutta. This was the first recorded performance of a Shakespeare drama in Eastern India. Other early performances were those of *Hamlet* on April 13, 1784, of *The Merchant of Venice* on October 21, 1784, and of *Richard III* on January 31, 1788.

These occasional performances organized by the European residents in the second half of the eighteenth century led to a revival of interest in the theatre among Indians in the following century. Under the patronage of the aristocratic section of the Bengalee society local talents began to present performances in theatre houses which were not at all developed technically nor fully commercialized as yet. Among the first dramas chosen for such semi-public performances under private patronage were some Shakespeare plays, mostly *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, and *The Merchant of Venice*.

In 1831 at the Hindu Theatre in Calcutta the performance of Shakespeare drama started with the staging of a portion of *Julius Caesar*. ‘The first performance of a complete play of Shakespeare took place at an educational institution when in 1853 the David Hare Academy presented *The Merchant of Venice* with conspicuous success.’ Next year on Wednesday, May 3, *Julius Caesar* was staged at the house of Peary Mohan Bose at Jorasanko, and highly appreciated by the elite of the city. Thus

gradually Shakespeare's plays were produced for a wide audience in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The tradition of staging Shakespeare drama in Calcutta did not die out with the coming of the twentieth century. After a brief and temporary vogue of performance by professional artists on the public stage, it returned to the academic institutions from where it had originally started. Still the commercial theatre houses made a few belated attempts to keep on the tradition. Giris Chandra Ghosh, the doyen of the Bengali theatre, staged his own Bengali version of *Macbeth* in his theatre house. In recent times there have again been attempts at Shakespeare revival on the stage by amateurs from the academic world. Students and teachers from Colleges and Universities have, in collaboration, presented many creditable performances of Shakespeare plays. One such was that of *Macbeth* at Shakespeare Birth Anniversary in 1954 by College professors under the auspices of the Shakespeare Society in Bengal. In the quater centenary year the Calcutta Central Celebration Committee at Mohajati Sadan, Cultural associations like the Calcutta University Institute and Prachya Vāni, and the universities have contributed to the performances of Shakespeare's plays both in the original and in translations.

Such stagings have been undertaken both within the campus of educational institutions and at public places outside. Student unions, town clubs, and other bodies have also presented Shakespeare plays, the performances being organized by local talents drawn largely from the academic world. Public performances, however, have come from both professionals and amateurs.

In the early period of Shakespeare staging in India valuable 'work was done by English educationists in India, who arranged the production of Shakespearean and other plays, and arranged for English actors to help with co-acting'. Throughout the nineteenth century the student community showed a great eagerness to perform Shakespeare plays. Even after the introduction of Bengali versions of Shakespeare's plays on Bengal's professional stage, Shakespeare's original plays in English continued to be performed by students in educational institutions.

Also the idea that detached portions from Shakespeare's dramas may provide enjoyment to the audience occurred first not to the commercial theatre directors but to the pioneers in the academic world. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century *Macbeth* was a popular play in Calcutta schools and colleges, and students often staged selected scenes from it at annual functions.

We get accounts of performances of Shakespeare plays and scenes at educational institutions in contemporary periodicals. *Samachar Darpan*

of February 19, 1831, published a report on the staging of Act III, Sc. i of *The Merchant of Venice* by the students of the Hindu College. The same paper of a later date reported a similar performance by those students at the Government House in Calcutta. Here also not the entire drama but only the Trial Scene (Act IV, Scene i) was staged.

We have also records of the stagings of Shakespeare's plays in the Metropolitan Institution and in the David Hare Academy. In 1853 there were two performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the David Hare Academy. Mr. Clinger, Head of the English Department of the Calcutta Madrasa, coached the students in the acting. Several Englishmen helped also in setting up the stage. About six to seven hundred natives and Europeans came to see the performance and highly praised the acting of the students. *The Bengal Harkara* dated February 15, 1853, commented on the annual function of the David Hare Academy thus : 'Instead of customary display of pyrotechnics, the pupils have resolved to celebrate the examination by enacting at the school premises scenes from *The Merchant of Venice*'. This was the first performance of a whole Shakespeare play by students. Other contemporary papers also praised highly the quality of the acting.

Inspired by the performance of the David Hare Academy, the old and present students of the Oriental Seminary proceeded to stage Shakespeare plays. The stage set up in that school came to be known as the Oriental Theatre. Acting was taught by Mr. Clinger and later by an English lady Clara Ellis. Here the students staged *Othello* on September 26 and October 5 in 1853, *The Merchant of Venice* on March 2 and 17 in 1854, and *Henry IV, Part I* on February 15 in 1855.

Among non-professional performances of Shakespeare plays those undertaken in different colleges deserve a special survey. As Shakespeare's dramas are always included in the undergraduate syllabus, students have shown a natural eagerness to stage Shakespeare plays. At St. Xavier's and many other colleges some of Shakespeare's dramas have been regularly staged, and on seeing these performances not only the teachers and students themselves but many outsiders have derived much pleasure. There has been also a laudable tradition of Shakespeare staging at the Calcutta University Institute. Till quite recently Shakespeare plays used to be performed here in original English. Of late there are seen sporadic attempts at staging Bengali translations of Shakespearean dramas with a sort of amused interest. Similarly, in the early period of the evolution of the public theatre in Bengal though Bengali versions of Shakespeare's plays were performed for a pretty long time, those have not been successful

commercially. This early failure gradually made the managers of professional stages drop Shakespeare plays from their programme.

The houses where Shakespeare plays were performed come under two categories, namely, those under European supervision and participation, and others under Indian management. Among the places where Shakespeare plays were acted by Englishmen living in this country during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries were The Play House in Lall Bazar Street (1755-59), The Calcutta Theatre or The New Play House in Theatres Street (1776), Mrs. Bristo's Theatre (1789), The Chowringhee Theatre in Theatre Road (1813-39), and Sans Souci Theatres (1839-49).

Later Shakespeare plays in original English were staged by Bengalee actors in theatre houses founded by Bengalees. This was pioneered by Prasanna Coomar Tagore in his Hindoo Theatre, the first Bengalee directed stage. In *Samachar Darpan* of December 17, 1831, there appeared a circular of a performance of a portion of *Julius Caesar* to be held at the Hindoo Theatre.

Similarly, actors appearing in Shakespeare plays have been both Europeans and Indians. Touring actors from Shakespeare's own country presented his plays in Indian cities during the British regime and afterwards. The early history of Shakespearean performances in India is linked with the outstanding figure of David Garrick, who not only acted a wide range of Shakespearean parts, but produced versions of the plays nearer to the originals than those previously current, and promoted the Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769. He had associations with the East India Company and was appealed to in 1774 to assist the residents of Calcutta, where theatrical performances had been given before 1757, with productions. He sent out a youngman with scripts of plays and scenery, and *Richard III* and *Hamlet* were staged.

Even after original Bengali dramas had been in full swing on the commercial stage here many theatrical parties from abroad came to this country and gave exhibition performances of Shakespeare plays. On witnessing their histrionic art, the actors in our country received inspiration and lessons on direction, choreography, and stage decoration.

The famous English actor Matheson Lang, who won reputation in different roles of Shakespeare's characters, came to Calcutta and appeared in public performances. Sisir Bhaduri, the illustrious Bengali actor, was influenced by his highly individualistic style of acting and interpretation of Shakespeare's characters. Recently English actors and parties have visited Indian cities like Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Bangalore, Bombay and gave performances in places like the St. Xavier's College and the

British Council. The New Shakespeare Company led by Mr. Conville came in 1964-65. At the British Council there have been regular programmes of Shakespeare's recorded plays, Elizabethan music, as also scheduled play-readings.

Among Indian actors in Shakespeare plays there have been both amateurs and professionals. In the staging of a scene from *The Merchant of Venice* by the students of the Hindu College in February, 1831, the parts of Solanio and Tubal were respectively taken by Kailas Chunder Dutt of Rambagan and Ramgopal Ghosh, who was to be one of the leaders of the Renaissance in Bengal. Their performance was reported favourably by *Samachar Darpan*. The same paper on March 12, 1834, again praised the acting of Iswar Chandra Ghosal and Madhusudan Dutt in the roles of Henry the Sixth and Gloster respectively in the annual function of the same institution at the Town Hall. For performing the complete part of a Shakespeare character the name of Baisnab Charan Addya remains inscribed in letters of gold in the annals of Shakespeare staging in India for his pioneering venture. When on August 17, 1848, and on a subsequent date *Othello* was performed in the European theatre, Sans Souci, with an all-English cast, the role of the Moor was assigned to this Bengalee youth, and his rendering of the hero's character received universal acclaim.

At the Oriental Theatre of the Oriental Seminary in performances of *Othello* in 1853, of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1854, and of *Henry IV* in 1855 Bengalee young men appeared in the roles of both male and female characters. Priyanath Dutt distinguished himself as Iago, Shylock, and Falstaff; Radhaprosad Basak figured prominently in the roles of Emilia and Portia. In a performance of *Macbeth* in 1900 at the Calcutta University Institute Jnanendra Basu appeared as Macbeth and Kiron Dutt as Macduff with remarkable success. In our times Utpal Dutt, a Xaverian, has been a highly successful interpreter of Shakespeare's tragic heroes on the stage.

As to the nature and quality of Shakespeare acting in this country a distinct tradition has grown steadily. At the earliest stage, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, both in Calcutta and in Bombay British amateur acting developed. Performances were intended primarily for the recreation of the European residents. Practically no account of the histrionic skill of these early Shakespeare actors has been recorded and preserved.

In the nineteenth century when Shakespeare acting passed on to the Indians, the quality of performance attained a remarkably high level of excellence. It can be seen from newspaper reports of the time

that the histrionic talent displayed by the actors and their perspective interpretation of the Shakespeare characters represented by them surprised and delighted even members of the European community.'

In the present century an increasingly large section of intelligent people, including college and university teachers, are participating in amateur Shakespeare acting, and the appreciation of Shakespeare on the stage is becoming more and more sophisticated. The tendency is towards outgrowing the old declamatory stage tradition of the last century and attaining a subtler and richer interpretative presentation of Shakespeare's characters.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE AND THE MODERN READER

S. K. DAS

SINCE the beginning of this century Marlowe's life and works have been thoroughly investigated and today we know more about him than about most Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. Several significant events in which he took part, his beliefs, the circumstances of his death, and various other facts concerning him have been unearthed by F. S. Boas, J. L. Hotson, A. L. Rowse, John Bakeless, Charles Norman and S. A. Tannenbaum.¹ The record of his life though necessarily far from complete, is very much fuller than it was a generation ago. We know for instance that his father belonged to the guild of shoemakers, that Marlowe himself was involved in espionage, that he held irreligious opinions and that he died in a tavern kept by the widow Eleanor Bull. Some of the most careful students of his work have even no doubts about the possibility of knowing what Marlowe really thought.² These investigations, it may be said with some degree of certainty, are not yet over; but the more important terrains have been explored and the latest findings confirm impressions which have come down to us through rumour and surmise. Even where we have no exact knowledge, such accounts as we possess today are both fascinating and intriguing. The materials in our hands are, in any case, much fuller and more authentic than those we have about the greatest playwright of the Elizabethan age. Today he is generally regarded as one of the most eloquent spokesmen in England for the complex of attitudes and the sequence of undertakings that we conveniently term Renaissance. This remains largely true inspite of Douglas Bush's assertion that he is less representative of the Elizabethan Renaissance than is, for example, Hooker.³

The predominantly Renaissance elements of Marlowe's plays need not, however, obscure the values that Marlowe has for the modern man. At least one question still remains for the modern reader to answer for himself. Do the plays of Marlowe have any significance for the modern man? Should he be still regarded as a 'pre-Shakespearean primitive'? Or should he be dismissed as a 'blank verse beast'? Critics tell us that all great poetry must possess the virtue of modernity and if we call

Marlowe a great poet we must necessarily accept him as a modern poet. But the dialectic may not satisfy one whose idea of modernity in literature is based on the substance of contemporary literature and a sensitive awareness of contemporary civilisation. One would still ask if the poet of the English Renaissance speaks for the modern man. For after we have been made to acknowledge his greatness as a poet, it would be a gain if we realise that his words have a meaning for us today. No true appreciation of art is possible unless our appreciation is permeated by a deep consciousness of our own time.

Tragedy depends upon ethical and metaphysical assumptions which the dramatist must invite his audience to share with him. Perhaps more than any of his contemporaries Marlowe mirrored in his plays his own changing vision of man's place in the universe. There is in all his plays an emphasis upon the limitless potentialities of mankind (*Dido, Tamburlaine, I*), and a sense of human limitation and defeat that Ellis-Fermor calls the mood of spiritual despair. These two polar opposites clash in his plays. It is in this sense that Marlowe may be said to be more of a modernist than most moderns. He is the soul nearest ours; Swinburne's view is also ours. Do we not find in him the prognosis of modern disquietude in the 'spiritual elephantiasis' of Marlowe's heroes? Tamburlaine is symptomatic of the beginning of man's quest for power and never before was it a more open and professed creed that it is today. Like Tamburlaine nearly all of Marlowe's protagonists are 'overreachers'. Their ethos is living dangerously between the alternatives of aspiration and sedition. To them there is but one absolute measure of all phenomena: the human will. The Duke of Guise is the chief exponent of such a belief:

That like I best, that flies beyond my reach.
Set me to scale the high Pyramids,
And thereon set the diadem of France;
I'll either rend it with my nails to naught,
Or mount the top with my aspiring wings,
Although my downfall be the deepest hell.

This is the quintessence of the Marlovian tragedy. The overreaching image sums up the whole predicament of modern life. Hence Marlow's protagonist is rarely the Everyman; he is more often the exceptional man who becomes the king because he is a great warrior or hero. This comes very close to the 'hubris' of the Greek tragedy, that arrogance of heroes which fatally provokes the anger of the gods. 'Pride goeth before a fall'—the proverbial formula for tragic irony seems to hold good regardless of changing epochs. The evidence for Marlowe's direct study

of Machiavelli seems to me inadequate but there is certainly the presence of a Machiavellian insight into the conditions in which an ambitious person may be expected to arise.⁴ Marlowe stressed, extolled and expounded throughout his career that Machiavellian virtue of virtues—'virtu' which has been translated in the modern language as 'initiative', 'self-reliance', or 'rugged individualism'. St. John had preached: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (*Epistle of John*, II, 16). But these are the leading motives of the humanistic drama; and we have in Marlowe's works a positive affirmation of the strongest drives—the appetite for sensation, power and knowledge—that animated and thrilled the Renaissance imagination and that have shaped so much of our modern outlook. He has only pushed them to their farthest limits which arouse in us mixed feelings of exhilaration and temerity. Tamburlaine's arrogant claim is:

I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,
And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about,
And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere
Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome.

To watch his progress is like watching the *Mirror for Magistrates* come to life. Marlowe's hero seeks at length to storm the gates of heaven. It is then that

Murderous Fates throw all his triumph down.

Tamburlaine has sought an earthly crown; and an earthly crown is the notorious emblem of worldliness and pride of life. In Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* we reach the terminal point of a sequence of explorative thought of which *Tamburlaine* is the beginning.⁵ For Tamburlaine

A God is not so glorious as a king.

This is not just bathos but blasphemy. Tamburlaine is *libido dominandi*, boundless ambition, *amour de l'impossible* in its grossly materialistic aspect. His love for Zenocrate is a force that modifies his ambition and results only in a temporary pause in his career of conquest and aggression: 'Tamburlaine takes truce with all the world (V. ii. 467)'⁶ He is the exponent of a new age and his arrogant claims reinforced by the characteristic images—Titans, Phaeton, Croeton and Lucifer—demonstrate his ethos.

At the beginning of the second part, however, the self-proclaimed god is no more than a mortal; his strength is his inhumanity and his weakness is in his mortality: 'Tamburlaine, the scourge of God, must die'. Tamburlaine's self-discovery must take him as far as death before he finds the limits set to his ambition. M. M. Mahood, therefore, describes *Tamburlaine* as "the only drama I know in which the death of the hero

constitutes the tragedy.”⁷ The great tragic heroes of Shakespeare experience the tragedy while they remain alive ; Tamburlaine must die in order to realise the tragic predicament of life. Consequently Marlowe’s play suggests the rediscovery of one of the elementary laws of human existence : its subjection to time. Arnold Toynbee has introduced Timur’s accomplishment as a supreme example of the suicidalness of militarism. It is a sobering comment on our age, if not on Marlowe’s tragedy. It symbolises the attitude of those whose lust for power impels them to elevate the means to get what they want into the only principle to which they are willing to ascribe any validity. The play is a parable of modern megalomania. The revival of *Tamburlaine* in more recent times having been dropped out of the repertory for more than hundred years has been justly greeted as peculiarly meaningful and appropriate.

Like Tamburlaine Marlowe’s Jew is ‘framed of finer mould’ than common men. The articles of his belief have been bluntly set forth in the wellknown prologue, and the fundamental premise of egoism is stated very precisely :

I count Religion but a childish toy.

Pollysyllables in Marlowe are generally regarded as a means of aggrandisement ; the monosyllabic ‘toy’ is the ultimate in belittlement. ‘Policy’ is the shibboleth of political realism of today, as it was with the Jew and the Christians of Marlowe’s play.

Who is honour’d now but for his wealth ?

asks the Jew He speaks not so much for his race and for his epoch as for us. Gold to him, as the crown was to Tamburlaine, the highest ‘felicity’ ; and he completes the blasphemy by marking his buried treasure with the sign of the Cross. This makes him far from being quite an alien in the shabbily commercial world of today which considers wealth as the supreme felicity. Marlowe’s Jew sublimates this shabby ideal—‘infinite riches in a little room’—from the sordid plane of economics to that of aesthetics. We have been told by Ruskin that a miser cannot sing about his gold ; but this is what the Jew precisely does. James Russell Lowell describes it as the very “poetry of avarice.” The Jew says to the Merchant :

What more may heaven do for earthly man
Than thus to pour out plenty in their laps,
Ripping the bowels of the earth for them,
Making the seas their servants and the winds
To drive their substance with successful blasts ?

Here is the subversion of values that exalts to the skies the God of Hades and of the riches likewise. This is a final commentary upon an

ethos, not so much Jewish as modern, turned upside down. We are the 'worldlings' to whom he addresses. In the scene with Friar Bernardine and Friar Jacomo the Jew is content to remind them with deplorable callousness that the violation of the Seventh Commandment is not to be taken as seriously as the Sixth. It is, therefore, appropriate that he expires in the steaming cauldron. *The Jew of Malta* is not the 'farce' which T. S. Eliot calls it; it is a proper tragedy because it portrays the degeneration of man reacting to evil.

With Gaveston Marlowe goes beyond Tamburlaine and Barabas in recording a new and dangerous way to power. The Machiavellian has become an Epicurean now; and his mode of seduction is poetry, music and sensual delights. Edward is born into a position, in which to survive he must be a Machiavellian superman like Tamburlaine or Mortimer; and since he is not, he is destroyed. That is his tragedy. But the tragedy of Mortimer is that he is destroyed by being precisely what Edward is not. Mortimer is punished for his sin and it is the inevitable fate of all who aspire beyond the limits of mortality. Edward is a king with the soul of an actor as much as Tamburlaine was an actor with the soul of a king. So Edward has to pay the most ironic penalties for the 'frolicking prodigalities' of his kingship. Mortimer stands as 'Jove's huge tree' the Olympian oak, to whom others are but shrubs. He has even viewed himself, in his heyday, rather as Fortune's foe than her favourite. The irony comes full circle.

Base Fortune, now I see that in thy wheel
There is a point to which when men aspire
They tumble headlong down : that point I touched
And seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
Why should I grieve at my declining fall ?

His final acceptance of this fatal decree is a belated recognition that like Tamburlaine he also must die. Mortimer as a traveller

Goes to discover countries yet unknown.

Mortimer is a foil for Edward himself and maintains his hold upon the Queen; this has an ironically close parallel in Gaveston's ascendancy over the King. The tragedy of Edward II is of a private individual "flung into the vortex of great events". "All live to die, and rise to fall"—Edward tells Spenser. Classical, medieval or modern, the peripeteia is the same, the reversal from grandeur to misery.

The protagonists of Marlowe's plays, however, should not be looked upon as merely illustrative of a morality pattern. His characters are masters of their fate in a different way from the morality figure who cries : 'As wynde in water I wave' (*Castle of Perseverance*, 1.380) Marlowe is a

moral thinker ; but he does not invent character to illuminate moral judgments. *Doctor Faustus* is the most complex and the most controversial of Marlowe's plays. *Faustus* like *Tamburlaine* embodies one of our major unsolved problems : man's attempts to transcend his limits. *Tamburlaine* cries : 'Shall sickness prove me now to be a man ?' and *Faustus* soliloquizes in his study : 'Yet art thou still but *Faustus* and a man'. *Faustus* begins where *Tamburlaine* ends ; Marlowe has only returned to a more human level of experience. *Faustus* has not sought knowledge with the longing to penetrate into the sources of life, but with an unmodified craving to soar above his human state. A new Lucifer he has hankered after a godlike omnipotence. This is the symptom of that most vicious leprosy of our unhallowed time. *Faustus* symbolises the vanity and crisis of knowledge without conscience. The framework of irony within which Marlowe presents *Faustus's* tragedy becomes an allegory for our century. "The play's treatment of the theme of sin is allegorical—or at least exemplary—and thus timeless ; yet the very complications and technicalities of sixteenth-century witchcraft help to locate the action and prevent it from being too abstract".⁸ Valdes and Cornelius (not present in the *Faust-Book*) are sharply individualised though shabby figures. Greg points out that they are "no deeply versed magicians welcoming a promising beginner but merely the devil's decoys luring *Faustus* along the road to destruction".⁹

Faustus the universal scholar rejects all existing forms of knowledge ; but even in his most impious moments of rejection he cannot forget God and heaven—'necromantic books are heavenly' ; 'a sound magician is a mighty God,' He even invokes the aid of God to give him the new sense of power. In scene three even Mephistopheles, the stealer of souls urges *Faustus* to save his soul ; and the man with a soul in pride and insolence throws away his soul and sneers at the weakness of his adviser. *Faustus* affixes the bloody signature with a blasphemous mockery of the last words of Jesus on the Cross : 'consummatum est.' Thus *Faustus* willy-nilly belongs to a Christian world where redemption is a cardinal fact. What Marlowe's religious beliefs were when he wrote this play cannot be properly ascertained, but there is nothing in it which could not have been written by a convinced Christian. Marlowe preserved and continued the traditional story.¹⁰ Mephistopheles is both the ally and the enemy of *Faustus*. There are moments when *Faustus* curses his doubtful deliverer :

When I behold the heavens then I repent,
And curse thee, wicked Mephistopheles,
Because thou hast depriv'd me of those joys.

The Good and Evil Angels appear and we witness Lucifer's pageant of the seven deadly sins. This may be said to be the kind of knowledge that the devil can give. Wagner tells us that Faustus is still studying astronomy: the heavens are still on his mind. However, Faustus seeks power alone and power corrupts him as it does all. It becomes in him a kind of intoxication. In the last act Faustus's inner conflict is sharply projected as a wavering between repentance and perdition. In his final hour the fact of redemption to which Faustus has closed his eyes for so many years becomes apparent to him with a terrifying clarity. "The apostrophe to Helen stands out from its context, not because anthologists excerpt it, but because Marlowe carefully designed it to be a set piece, a purple passage, a supreme invitation to love."¹¹ But it would be careless not to relate it to the central theme of the play. The play's irony is never deeper than here. Helen stands for physical pleasure; she is also a symbol of classical civilisation which in the Renaissance called forth such devotion. Her beauty is 'heavenly'; 'heaven is in these lips/ And all is dross that is not Helena.' Once again we have here the values turned upside down. The ironic secondary meaning of the passage suggests destruction. The 'topless towers' are familiar symbols for illimitable aspiration and Marlowe juxtaposes them to the all-consuming element of fire—'burnt the topless towers of ilium.' One may also say that Faustus's soul is 'topless' which means lofty. Faustus also burns with passion and is also doomed to a burning hell. The fire of lust also suggests the fire of hell.

Sweet Helen make me immortal with a kiss

Faustus exclaims in the very act of surrendering his true immortality. Has he not given up eternal life to have doubtful immortality in hell? Faustus makes a startling comparison of Helen to Jupiter—'brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter' and he compares himself to Semele; and like Semele he will also be destroyed by the flaming vision of Jupiter. Helen is also

More lovely than the monarch of the sky

In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms.

William Modlen, the Macmillan editor, comments: ". the water-nymph Arethusa was beloved by the River-God Alpheus (see Shelley's *Arethusa*). Marlowe's mythology seems to be at fault."¹² Marlowe's mythology is not at fault. Arethusa was one of the Hesperides loved by Jupiter; she is the sunset which also suggests the flames; the glow of the sunset will slowly merge into the night as Faustus's soul will be lost in eternal darkness. By a curious extension symbols of religious belief have become metaphors of passion; an aesthetic surface masks an ethical reality. The justly famous scene has never lacked admirers and it is only appropriate

to see it as the climax of a subtle and psychologically profound study not as an impressive fragment. It is an apt commentary on all those who aspire beyond the human condition. Faustus accepts damnation rather than acknowledge a limit to man's capacity. Marlowe's view of Christianity is certainly implicit in this play ; and it is that the Christian Promise of Salvation is one way out of the human dilemma. Ribner says if Marlowe lived longer, he might have attempted a play on christian affirmation¹⁸. But in *Doctor Faustus* Marlowe emphasises the unheroic stature of the hero and the power of Lucifer. The terror and futility of life are revealed as they never had been before in English drama. There seems to be no compensating hope of any kind available to Faustus. I believe that Ellis-Fermor is partly correct in seeing *Dr. Faustus* as a play about Marlowe's own sense of loss and frustration. It remains one of the most personal of Marlowe's plays and perhaps of all Elizabethan drama. In the figure of Faustus we see the perennial human aspiration to reconstruct a universe in terms of unlimited power without unlimited responsibility, indulgence without retribution. Marlowe's final achievement in tragedy is that in his last two plays he was able to present a comprehensive view of mankind and to make some statement about the relation of good and evil in the world, as every tragic vision must.

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GEORGE MEREDITH'S HANDLING OF TIME *

AMITABHA SINHA

GRANTED the twentieth century fascination for time, its special importance in the formal organization of the novel cuts across periods, no doubt because of, as Ian Watt says, the novel's "closeness to the texture of daily experience".¹ A conspectus of the development of the novel from Fielding to the recent, French antinovels surely testifies to this generic importance of time—although the treatment of time in the twentieth-century novel is obviously much more intricate than before. However, all novelists, whether old or new, do not necessarily give a deliberate attention to time as, say, the ones mentioned a few lines back do. Meredith, however, consciously manipulates time in his novels, a consideration of which reveals important features of his structure and technique. To do will be the business of this essay, something not done by anybody as yet.

A few more generalizations, however, are necessary. The ramifications of functional time in Meredith's novels, as indeed in novels in general, are based on the distinction between "external" or clock and calendar time and "experiential" or subjective time, across which cuts the other important distinction between "fable"-time and reader's time. Instead of attempting here a theoretical summary of the complex functions which these constitute, I shall let this essay develop them in the terms in which Meredith himself handles time: these terms are, briefly, Meredith's treatment of chronology, then his breaking down of chronology, and finally, his complete upsetting of external time.

Firstly, Meredith's treatment of chronology. While it is true that novels must follow some sort of a chronology—for stories are growths of events in time—it requires to be pointed out that Meredith is one of those novelists (like Fielding, Emily Bronte, and Joyce) who builds a palpable and deliberately patterned chronology. Thereby he produces an awareness of calendar and clock time, which becomes a necessary part of the reader's response to his stories. *Harry Richmond* perhaps least

* Textual references are to the *Memorial Edition of the Works of George Meredith*, London: Constable. 1910-11.

shows the tendency ; elsewhere the tendency is more prominent, though with varying intensity. What is more important is that Meredith does not impose the chronology from the outside through obvious statements, but makes it develop itself through cross-references and inferences. For my purpose, I shall deal with a few, selected novels as representative instances of his control of chronology.

In the beginning, I shall briefly illustrate Meredith's general methods of building a chronology from *Richard Feverel* (1859), his first novel, the chronology consisting of months, seasons, and years: The action of the novel starts on Richard's fourteenth birthday in a certain October (p.10). Later on, on the day of his marriage, Richard is nineteen years and six months old, as Clare accurately says (p.337). The month of Richard's marriage is, consequently, April, calculating from the above-mentioned reference. While July is the time of their honeymoon (p.354), the time when Richard and Lucy are separated after their marriage is found from a cross-reference to be September, as we learn the fact from Mrs. Berry and Ripton talking to one another in November (p.423). The Richmond party, where Richard's temptation will first start, is arranged "on a morning in October" (p.401, also see p.402), and this by implication covers Richard's birthday, which needs must be the twentieth. Incidentally, since the period of separation also covers October, its coincidence with the germination of the "temptation" gives an ironical and symbolical significance to the twentieth birthday. The time when Lucy is "rescued" and taken to London by Mrs. Berry is January next year (p.461). About a month later (p.481), that is, in February--this is supported by the reference to a "winter sun" in another context (mentioned below)—Richard meets his father in London. It is around this time that Lucy gives birth to her baby, since the "winter sun" is mentioned when Lucy has already christened her baby (p.483), an information very casually given : incidentally, the time of this occurrence clicks with Richard's marriage with Lucy in April. Richard learns this news at the time of "the summer air" (p.519). Moreover, it is early summer, probably May or June, inferred from Adrian's statement, "we had a fine spring" (p.500), which is mentioned to Austin at a time just before the latter goes to Germany to give the news to Richard. That also is roundabout the time of the novel's ending ; for Richard's arrival in England, his fighting the duel and the consequent tragedy with which the novel ends (chs. XLIV-XLV), all *immediately* follow the above (and therefore take place in May or June in that early summer). The total time-span of the action is, therefore, six years and six or seven months.

Richard Feverel well illustrates the general significance of Meredith's

treatment of chronology. Firstly and obviously, the chronology gives the action something like a "historical" realism, inasmuch it produces a concrete view of the time of the action. Secondly, by enveloping the action in a nearly complete framework of recognizable time—the six and odd years—the chronology tends to perform the structural function of the unity of time. Thirdly, the interesting, indirect manner of building the chronology reveals one of the most distinctive features of Meredith's treatment of time. The chronology, as we saw, is not effected in an obvious way but through cross-referential calculations and inferences, and through information casually given in the course of the action, the times of the occurrence being only occasionally stated by the author. (That this casual information always clicks with the calculations shows that it is deliberately given.) Again, these cross-references and inferences give an inner structural cohesion to the story in terms of time. Through these devices Meredith weaves the awareness of time inside the texture of the story, subtly compelling the reader into accepting it; thereby he gives the story a dimension which is not possible in mere namings of months, seasons and years².

Interesting as these general features are, what I find to be the still more important aspect of Meredith's treatment of chronological time lies in continuity, that is, the succession of units of time—days, months, or years—without any greatly recognizable gap of the unaccounted-for time between them. Through this, the very movement of time implicit in all novels, "the interminable tapeworm", as Forster calls it,³ is dramatized within the action instead of being imposed on it from the outside. Since this must involve a closely packed succession of events—mental or physical—within a limited compass of time, this produces dramatic concentration in the action. This is a special characteristic of the technique of modern novelists,⁴ which culminated in Joyce's full-scale application of it in *Ulysses* and this is one of the reasons why Meredith's effecting of continuity in his novels deserves a special notice.

We shall start from continuity *within* days—which produces the highest concentration of dramatic movement. It is now and then seen that, when seeking to produce a scenic "action", Meredith tends to prolong his presentation of a day as far as possible. Mostly, in such cases he makes the day prolong itself beyond one chapter, thus transcending the sense of a formal break that a chapter implies, and effects a sense of unimpeded continuity of time. Thus, for example, the day on which the main action of *The Amazing Marriage* (1895) opens, begins in chapter I at dawn, wears through the noon, the afternoon, and the evening, and goes upto the end of chapter IV, covering fifty-four pages (33-87). One day

in *The Egoist* (1879), the longest in the novel, perhaps in all Meredith's novels, thus covers one hundred and seventeen pages (496-613) and nine chapters (XLI-XLIX), and is one of the most remarkable instances of continuity in the pre-twentieth-century novel.⁵ An interesting way in which Meredith effects such continuity needs special mention. Obviously such a presentation requires at least the minimum references to parts of a day, viz. morning, afternoon, etc. Meredith often accentuates these parts for a still greater concentration and a more emphasized continuity, in terms of clock-symbols, and sometimes of universal, time-denoting activities such as breakfast, lunch and so on. Let us take another day from *The Egoist*, for instance. It starts from breakfast (p.171), and it gradually goes through "fifteen minutes left for lunch-bells" (p.214), afternoon (p.215), "anticipation of the dinner-bell" (p.224), eleven o'clock after dinner (p.237) and then merges into the dawn of the next day (p.243)—thus, in all covering seventy-two pages and seven chapters. Incidentally, the presentation of days in the bulk of *The Egoist* is full of such references (an account of these days is given below.)

The same principle as in the case of single days,⁶ leads Meredith to present the continuity of *days in succession*. In such cases, time wears through the narration of a detailed experience, which takes it beyond the limitation of one day. Following the term used by Beach, I shall call the large time-units, formed by such successive, continuous days as "suites". My first instance is from *The Amazing Marriage*, where six such continuous days merge into one another, covered by fifty-seven pages (371-428) and five-odd chapters (between chs. XXXV and XLI). The first day of the "suite" starts on a March morning (p. 371) with the meeting between Carinthia and Fleetwood in Wales; the action proceeds onwards throughout the day, until night comes (371-91), Fleetwood tosses wide awake in the night, after Carinthia's rejection of him, and the night breaks into the next day (pp.391-92). This second day, immediately starting from the morning—with Fleetwood starting for London—, wears through the evening and the night (the time, 2 a.m., is mentioned in p. 100) when Fleetwood and his associates are at the opera (pp.398-402); then it continues into the morning of the next day (9 a.m., p.402). The third day, beginning with the picnic arrangements, moves on to evening (Gower "dining", p.405), and then upto night (p.406), as Fleetwood enters Gower's room for a conversation. The night continues for four pages (pp. 406-9), with Gower and Fleetwood engaged in a hot debate, until the next morning. This day, the fourth, starting when Fleetwood and Gower are still together, continues with the latter's subsequent (that is, some hours later, p.413) proposal of marriage to

Madge and his meeting with Carinthia. This is followed by the fifth day starting with Gower meeting Fleetwood once more (p.418); this day continues upto the night (presented in pp.426-27), and then onto the sixth day (p.427), with Fleetwood once more rejected by Carinthia, departing for London. This day ends when night comes with Fleetwood conversing with Lord Feltre (p. 428). This instance, by the way, is especially signified by continuity through nights (nights—which are not periods of activities—not being included in ordinary presentations of continuity); this is necessitated by the requirement of presenting the tense, mental imbalance of Fleetwood, which keeps him awake through the nights.⁷

Meredith applied the principle of continuity on a broader level to certain cases where the entire chronology of years, months, and days is presented as a continuous whole without any considerable gaps of time left unexplained. However, two things require to be pointed out. Firstly, an ideal continuity without any gaps can never be effected, for the necessities of selection and accentuation of facts entail cracks and diffusions in the continuity (even in *Ulysses*, the clock is made to stop at points and resume continuity later on). Only, the illusion of a ceaseless continuity can be effected, where the cracks are made as unnoticed as possible. Secondly, the chronologies of Meredith are mostly in terms of big units of time like years and months unlike the eighteen-hour day of *Ulysses*. As such, the cracks in them are necessarily of a bigger size in the form of panoramic references or summaries.

I shall cite *The Egoist* as a characteristic instance. After the exposition of a bit of Willoughby's past three years ago (pp. 12-30), the total time span of the action of the novel is seen to cover five years and about two months, the major part of the action being contained in twenty-six days in the first month of the ninth year. In the panoramic beginning, the continuity is effected in the presentation of the movement of time through April-to-April cycles. At first there is a panorama of three years ending on April 30 (pp. 26-29); this is succeeded by another year terminating in the next April (p. 33), which in its turn is followed by the immediately succeeding year ending with still another April (p. 61). This is the point where the drama of the main action starts, with Willoughby's invitation to the Middletons. After a presentation of two separate days (pp. 63-88, 112-21), each followed by a short, indefinite interval (e.g., pp. 95, 105, 121) and all of them succeeded by a passage of three consecutive days (pp. 143-46), the drama starts gathering intensity in Clara's first straining after freedom (ch. XIII). From now on, eight successive days are presented, starting from the fourth day. Each continues through its various parts measured by daily activities like "breakfast" or by the

"clock", and then continues into the next—sometimes even taking nights in their stride. This goes on till the end of the comedy is reached (p.625), barring barely one page for the very short, appendixlike end (that reaches upto June). These eight continuous days are covered by four hundred and seventy-nine pages and about thirty-eight chapters, the total number of pages in the novel being 626, and they form the largest time—"suite" in Meredith's novels.⁸

Of this type of continuity, perhaps the most representative instance is of *One of Our Conquerors* (1891). The chronology of the novel comprises two-odd years, and the first, complete year from April to April, covered by the major part of the story and presented in the first five-hundred and ten pages (the total is five-hundred and fourteen), and ending in Victor's madness is very remarkably presented as a continuous whole through even increasing units of time—first single then "suites", finally structures—which are eleven in number—comprising the "suites" and separated by occasional passages of time.⁹ Nevertheless, what is especially remarkable about the continuity of time in this novel relates to a still larger time-frame constituted by the second year which is summarized in the epilogue-like, four pages, recounting Victor's death and Nesta's marriage with Dartrey (pp. 511-14). The significant fact to be noticed is that this second year *immediately* follows the first, carrying the flow of time from the latter in a rather interesting manner. The first year ends on the night of the catastrophe with the statement, "that night's infinite sadness...concentrated on Nesta" (p. 510). This is immediately followed by the opening statement of the next para where the summary starts—the opening of the second year :

The night went past *as a year*. The year followed it *as a refreshing night*. Slowly lifting her [Nesta] from our abysses, "it was a good angel to the girl" (p. 511, italics mine.)

It is thus that the movement of time continues uninterrupted from the first year which expands as it were, or, to borrow a filmic term, "fades out", through its last night into the second year. This sense of continuity is strengthened by the clever, interpenetrating juxtaposition of the images of the night and the year in one another's terms. It is further heightened by the narrative mechanism of putting the second year in the same chapter and not formally into a separate one, so that it is taken into the stride of continuity, without any sense of a break.

Finally, a unique point about continuity in the novel lies in the fact that the story does not end even with the second year, but proceeds after Nesta's recovery and marriage, and the conclusion most artistically dramatizes the very principle of continuity. Meredith does this by bring-

ing about a parity between the inevitable end of the action and the theoretical implication that no action, continuous in time, should ever stop. He does this by cleverly using a conventional way of ending novels, namely, the historic present, which he causes to break into the fictional preterite in the last paragraph of the final summary (p. 514). Here we see that people *keep doing* things: Skepsey *rejoices* in the service of his new master, Dartrey; Colney goes on writing his satires which *produce* the "flush" of contemporary reviews; the comedy of vegetarianism and teetotalism continue separating Pempton and Priscilla just as religious divisions *keep* Louise and Peridon asunder. Unlike most endings of Victorian novels, this neither looks forward to the future nor affords a satisfied sense of completion, for there is nothing new that is indicated in these activities.¹⁰ What these characters do now is what they have been always doing—as the action of the novel testifies—and the narration here shows the action in a state of *continuous present*. This continuous present serves as a dramatized image of the eternal continuity of time, and can be described as the continuity of time into timelessness.¹¹

Another, and a secondary aspect of Meredith's use of chronology, which is nevertheless allied with continuity, is what I would call modulation. This consists in the relation between the chronology and the reader's time, representing the varying interest of the subject-matter. While at its basis lies the old difference between the narrative methods of panorama and scene, the method can secure important effects when the action is limited between two *recognizable* points in time and thereby gets a dramatic intensity. Sometimes, Meredith very precisely manipulates the relationship between the reading time (that is, the page-space) and the time-distances between events, which very aptly expresses the varying tempo of the action, so that the chronology acquires a depth instead of having an one-dimensional, flat appearance. Not that this is a regular phenomenon in Meredith, but it is a unique occurrence that deserves special notice. The most characteristic examples of this are found in *Vittoria* (1867; a novel remarkable for the treatment of time in many respects), as I shall now illustrate.

The action of the novel starts in the August (pp. 26, 46) of 1847,¹² and ends in the spring (p. 616)—certainly March, may be a little later—of 1849 (ch. XLVI), and thus comprises about one year and seven months, which is its "dramatic" framework. Of these, the passage of four months from September '47 to January '48, is only indicated, and that leaves about fifteen months which are actually presented (this is followed by a very brief panorama of ten years). The greater part of the narrative, the first movement of the action (chs. I-XXVIII), covers incidents within

one month from August to September, 1847, in twenty-eight chapters (I-XXVIII) comprising 367 pages (1-367), out of the fifteen months or so covered in the total of forty-six chapters and 626 pages (the Epilogue apart). This movement presents the dramatic series of events, all inevitably leading to the climax of the scene at La Scala (chs. XIX-XXI) and then with Vittoria's flight, gradually losing their tension. Now, the awareness produced of the strict limitation of one month, in which so many pages and chapters have been squeezed, no doubt gives the sense of a high-powered intensity to the action. By simple calculation, we find an apt image of this intensity in contrast with the succeeding parts of the narration, in terms of chapter—and page-numbers given to an average month. Thus we see that the intensity of this part (pages and chapters mentioned above) is about eighteen times greater than that in the rest of the narration whose twentytwo chapters and 279 pages cover the remaining fourteen months or so of the action.

Within this first movement, again, varying modulations of chronology are produced with equal, if not a greater effect. This becomes evident from the end of chapter VII, which eventually lands us in September; it is from now that the dramatic tension leading to the episode of La Scala gathers momentum. Consequently, the bulk of the action is presented in the continuity—internal as well as “suite”-wise—of a few, successive, recognizable days, from the 13th to the 18th of September. Here the action gradually grinds nearer to its climax on the 15th and the movement of time is correspondingly seen to become slower and more detailed. An idea of this can be formed from the following comparative estimate of the number of chapters and pages devoted to each day. The 13th is covered by a little more than 2 chapters (VIII-X) and 21 pages (76-97). The 14th, on which day the suspense in anticipation of the gala event increases, is presented in roughly 5 chapters (in X-XV) and 81 pages (97-178). The critical 15th is covered by a little more than 7 chapters (XV-XXII) and 83 pages (178-261). The few climactic hours of this day, where the suspense is concentrated, are presented in 4 chapters (XIX-XXII) and 50 pages (211-61) out of the 7 chapters and 83 pages; the movement of time slows down to a minimum pace through almost every incident in these hours. The climax over, the action gets less intense dramatically, and correspondingly the movement of time is shown as becoming faster and more diffuse. The incidents in the next 3 days—from the 16th to the 18th—are covered by 4 chapters (XXIII-XXVI) and 58 pages (262-320): it may be noted that the chapter—and page-equivalents of a day here (about 2 and 19 respectively) are less than those of the 13th (2 and 21 respectively). The action gets even much less intense in

the following events of *Vittoria's* stay in Meran, where the contours of time are seen to have become blurred and its movement still faster, so that about a week or so (after a few days) is covered by 2 chapters (XXVII-XXVIII) and only 47 pages (321-67). These accentuations and reliefs effect an awareness of the tempo of time which in its turn helps our reaction to the varying intensity of the action.¹³

The examination of Meredith's presentation of chronology thus leads to two general conclusions, already indicated : firstly, these build an awareness of the passage of time when the events occur, which makes the action credible and vivid ; secondly, these also serve as technical means of determining the readers' aesthetic response to the subject-matter of the novels. We shall now turn to those aspects of Meredith's presentation of time, which, subsuming chronology, point in other directions.

II

Another important feature of Meredith's handling of time is that he does not always strictly follow a straightforward chronology of events in his narration, but upsets it at certain key-points by pushing the action back and forth. He does this either to effect a simultaneity of events or to make diverse strands of the action converge simultaneously on one point for the sake of dramatic emphasis. These are occasions where the chronology of events as they happened and the chronology of their narration differ, and show interesting instances of the "time-shift" device.

Sometimes, Meredith achieves this even by making the omniscient narrator's retrospective vision cut across the current action. As for instance, in *Evan Harrington* (1860), after the action begins and continues from Mel's death onward (chs. I-II), the narrator performs a flash-back to the past of the story (before Mel's death) to tell us about the careers of Mel's children and to prepare us for the subsequent events of the "current" action (ch. III). What is significant is that the narrator does not exactly adopt the loose method of "harking back to make up", for the flash-back is not just a plain summary of the past, but consists of a short summary (pp.19-23) followed by a scenic presentation of the actions (pp. 24-30). The dramatically narrated events of the sisters' past lives, converging on that of the Countess de Salder, continue into the scene on board the *Jocasta* as Evan with Rose and the Countess is coming back to England (ch. IV). This scheme is lodged at a time concurrent with that of the present action of the novel, and ends where the thread of the latter is picked up once more. The whole chapter (III) is thus like a separate story, co-eval with the former chapters, and is not a sudden interruption by the past of the present. As a matter of fact, this tech-

nique achieves for *Evan Harrington* the interesting case of two beginnings, fulfilling the dramatic requirement of the story. Thus, the scene of Great Mel's death, followed by the creditors waiting for Evan's arrival (pp.1-6), is one beginning; the Countess and Evan coming to England (they do not know about Mel's death), is another. The ultimate meeting of these two simultaneous events in chapter IV achieves drama for us, so that we watch at the same time two separate, unconnected motives, travelling forward to determine the course of the principal action. Although "panoramically" manipulated, this, therefore, diminishes the very sense of intrusion which omniscience implies, and produces the effect of "time-shift" or "chronological looping" which characterizes so much of modern fiction.

The more frequent manner in which Meredith cuts across chronology is not through such omniscient methods but by shuttling the *continuous dramatic present* of the action. The past is recapitulated, but almost entirely in a scenic manner and with no signs of manipulation, so that the effect produced is that of the story itself roving back in time. Through the breaking down of straightforward narration in this manner, Meredith not only skirts round the necessity of an intruding retrospect but also achieves another, more important effect. He maintains the unity of the dramatic surface of the action and at the same time shows its inner multiple strands which secure maturer effects of "time-shift".

I shall turn again to *Evan Harrington* for an example—quite a simple one—to give an idea of the method. This is from chapters XXV-XXVII of the novel. At the end of chapter XXV (pp. 318-21), Rose and Evan decide to tell Lady Jocelyn about their relationship, and then proceed to meet her. The following chapter, however, does not present subsequent events. It narrates how Mrs. Mel learns from Goren's letter about Evan's activities at Beckley Court and starts for that place. All this happens at a time co-terminous with that of the earlier chapters, conveyed through the opening statement of this chapter, "at this period... Mrs. Mel" (p. 321). The opening of the next chapter (XXVII) takes us back to the present of the main action through the narration of how Evan and Rose continue their activities (pp. 339 onwards) which we had last seen at the end of chapter XXV. The interpolation of the Mrs. Mel scene in the intervening chapter thus presents a simultaneous strand of action. Its importance lies in the fact that it imperceptibly prepares us for the later, second "Bull-dogs" chapter XXXI. For, this chapter presents a scene which continues the action in two previous chapters (XXV and XXVII), and the same scene presents Mrs. Mel's dramatic appearance in the picnic, which will ultimately upset Evan and Rose. Thus this last chapter ("Bull-

dogs") becomes a terminating point of two simultaneous actions, but without incurring for the author the responsibility of explaining how it came to pass.

The next, and perhaps, a more interesting instance is from *Vittoria*. This is in the chapters, (XXIII-XXVI) presenting the events of Vittoria's flight after the La Scala event on the 15th September. The technique is used for effectively leading us to the famous "duel in the pass" (ch. XXVI) ...the events of which cover the same time as covered by the earlier three chapters. These chapters show Captain Weisspriess journeying to capture Vittoria, and also the time spanned by Vittoria's and Angelo's journey in chs. XXIII-XXV : this narration goes on till the two strands meet together (p. 308) in chapter XXVI, being discussed now. The account opens with the statements, "meanwhile Weisspriess had not remained idle" (p. 302) and "he remained at the sub-Alpine inn until his servant Wilhelm arrived" (p. 303). Now, since from chapter XXIII we learn that Vittoria had shaken off Weisspriess's trail at the sub-Alpine inn on the night of the 16th, these activities of Weisspriess must be from the 16th onward. In p.302 we find that Weisspriess is at Vermiglio, moving towards Trent ; he reaches Trent on that day (p. 306), starts for Cles on the next morning, "one hour before dawn" (p. 306), arrives at the place to learn that Vittoria has just passed in advance of him (pp. 306-7), and orders his men to capture the members of the fugitive Vittoria's party and send them all (except Vittoria) to Cles (p. 307). Now, from chapter XXIV we know that Vittoria was last seen to be heading for Meran, leaving Angelo, on the 18th September (pp. 285-86); on the same day, as we learn from the next chapter (XXV), Angelo found three men and one woman (who, we know, are from Vittoria's party) at Cles, being marched by an Austrian (p.301). Obviously, when we learn of Weisspriess's activities (mentioned above) in Cles in the later narration, we make an instant cross-reference to Angelo's discovery, and know Weisspriess to have been active on the 18th. Since the sub-Alpine-inn-Vermiglio phase of Weisspriess's activities is narrated as having taken place on the previous day, its date must be on the 17th, and therefore, the period during which he stayed at the sub-Alpine inn must be between the 16th and 17th. Thus Weisspriess's activities, the substance of the first part of chapter XXVI, cover the total movement of time from the 16th to the 18th, and represent a flash-back to a different strand parallel to the main action related to Vittoria's flight in the previous chapters (XXIII-XV). The consequent effect of this time-manoeuvre in our imagination is the spectacle of the hunter and the quarry running parallel on their courses at the same period of time, even day by day. No doubt this greatly heightens the suspense of the action which is leading towards a

climax, where the two strands—Weisspriess and Vittoria—meet on the evening of the 18th (same chapter, p. 308), and result in the duel in the pass between Angelo and Weisspriess. A comparison between the chronology of the events and the chronology of narration in the following chart will help to have a clearer and a more graphic picture of the movement.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Chronology of events</i>	<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Chronology of Narration</i>
16th (1)	Vittoria slips away from Weisspriess (ch. XXIII)	XXIII	Vittoria slips away from Weisspriess (16th).
(2)	Weisspriess stays on at the inn (XXVI)		
17th (1)	Vittoria on her way to Cles (not narrated)	XXIV	Vittoria going to Meran (18th).
(2)	Weisspriess met by Wilhelm, and going to Vermiglio (XXVI)	XXV	Angelo meeting the party of four (18th).
18th (1)	Vittoria going toward Meran (XXIV) and Angelo meeting the party of four (XXV)	XXVI	Weisspriess staying on at the inn, and his activities (16th-18th).
(2)	Weisspriess going from Trent to Cles (XXVI).		Vittoria on her way to Cles (17th).
18th evening : Vittoria and Weisspriess meet ; ch.XXVI.			

A more complex case will be seen in our last instance, from *One of Our Conquerors*. This is in chapters XXXI-XXXIII (pp.365-94 ; here the pages are of a special importance, as we shall see), presenting the happenings of some hours on the morning of a certain day. In the course of chapter XXXI, Skepsey heads for Brighton in a train on an early morning and in the course of the chapter, he meets the Rev. Septimus the same compartment ; after both get off at Brighton, the latter informs the other that he is going to meet Nesta presently and disappears (pp. 365-72). The unit of time continues, with Skepsey meeting Dartrey and then with Dartrey's subsequent activities, till the latter, walking with Colonel Sudley, meets Nesta and Septimus walking towards them near the pier (p. 388). This meeting which reminds us of the Reverend's farewell message to Skepsey (p.371), acts as the point which flashes the action back to where the Reverend had left Skepsey. From this page (388) and from the beginning of chapter XXXIII, the action in the Reverend's area of action continues onward, presenting the scene between Nesta and him—in course of which the secret of her parentage is divulged to her. It comes to an end in p. 394 with a repetition of their meeting

with Dartrey and Sudley, which was already narrated in a previous page (388). It is in this meeting that the distinctive quality of this particular manipulation of time lies. Its difference from ordinary flash-backs is easily perceived. While those are effected from any point in time in the presentation of *one* action which is met at a later point by another action, here the meeting point of the two parallel strands is also the point from where the flash-back is effected ; the flash-back and then the retraction together for a cyclic movement. This is why the meeting is twice narrated, and it is to be noticed that its significance is different each time : the first time it is from Dartrey's point of view, when he sees Nesta's white face, mistaking it to have been due to Major Worrell's treatment of her (p.389), and the second time it is from the Reverend's point of view, who is too engrossed in his wooing of Nesta to do anything more than mechanically salute Dartrey and Sudley (p.394). The meeting is thus shown not merely through the narration, but principally through our imaginative piecing together of the two points of view. The *montaging* of two situations with which the technique rounds off the flash-back, gives a perfect example of chronological looping, and comes very close to filmic devices used for the same kind of effect¹⁴.

III

A different but related manner in which Meredith transcends chronological narration is in his manipulation of the time-locus,¹⁵ that is, the particular matrix of time in which narration is made. This is something which concerns the involvement of the reader in either the narrator's time, also to be described as the reader's historical present, or in the fictional or fable-time. By shunting the reader in between the two or only within the latter, Meredith produces certain effects which are not possible in an one-dimensional chronological narration made from a fixed point in the narrator's present. As we shall see, this quite often shows functional uses of the technique of dramatized narrators, especially of agent-narrators.

My first instance, taken from *Chloe* (1879 ; Memorial ed., XXI), provides a quite interesting illustration of the inter-relation between different time-loci. The "historical" present (of the narrator) is dramatized, as placed somewhere in the nineteenth century, from where he narrates the story (from ch.II) and gives the "review" of the Ballad (ch.I). This is suggested through his contemporaneity with the poets (p.194) ; the events of the story, too, refer back to a past suggestive of the eighteenth century (e.g., pp.191-92, 215).

Along with the narration, the story also comes partly through the

"memoirs" of the beau—the "fictional" source—¹⁶ who declares them to be records of events, made by him fifteen years later. This narration through the memoirs sets the events at a second remove from us. Then again, the narrator's account itself very often adopts the points of view of characters, as that of the beau—not as the later recorder but as an individual in the story—,Chloe and Susan; this involves us in the immediate dramatic present of the story. Thus the reader is involved in three time-scales in the narration. Firstly, the immediate involvement imparts to us a vivid impression of the experience presented and helps us to understand the limitations of the points of view. Secondly, a still dramatic involvement is produced by the Memoirs, but their retrospective account naturally has a detachment denied to the direct involvement. This effects a contrast between the beau's earlier limited vision and later horrified enlightenment (p.265), which makes us gauge his mistakes and understand his development to sobriety and self-knowledge (esp. p. 266). Thirdly, the perspective of the reader's (or narrator's) present which helps us to look at the story with another sort of detachment. We are enabled to estimate the emotions of the later (or maturer) beau writing his memoirs from a similar, detached perspective (pp.265-66). Besides, the occasional mock-serious but semi-sympathetic tone of the narrator, from his aloof stand in the historical present, produces the sense of a choric non-involvement against which the shock of Chloe's story is effectively contrasted.

My next instance is from *Harry Richmond* (1871), effected entirely through agent-narrators, and made more interesting by the fact of the first-person technique of the story. Certain interesting effects of multi-time-level narration are produced by the manner of recounting the Dauphin-episode, scattered in a variety of contexts in two chapters (XLI-XLII). The episode, calculated to illuminate the attitude of the London Society to Roy and his tragic comedy, takes place in Harry's absence, and therefore can be told by the narrator that is, Harry, only on the basis of other characters' reports.

It is to be noticed that the very process of communication through which Harry is enlightened is dramatized, as different agent-narrators tell the tale at different times, from different angles. He receives the first version from the Squire, who tells him and Captain Bulsted with great relish how some city-people made fun of Roy by getting him together with a "pretender" to the French throne (pp.473-75). Harry determines to find out the whole story (the Squire's account being second-hand itself, (p.477). In the process of his doing so, all other details of the story are gradually unfolded to him through a number of other agent-narrators

reporting the story at different times on a later day in London (ch.XLII). Harry first meets Jorian De Witt, from whose account he further learns that the Dauphin-episode was a deliberate trap laid for Roy by Lady Kane, Edbury and Tenby (pp.482-83). Next, Harry learns the story from Lady Kane herself and gathers from her that the affair had been very successful (p.484). After this he gets another version from his friend Temple, along with the important fact that "Edbury was the capital offender" (p.485). Finally, the entire episode is presented as a story pieced together from the accounts of Jennings, Jorian De Witt, Alton, and Wedderburn (pp.485-89). This narration of the Dauphin-episode has several functions. Firstly, being revolved across several points in time through this piecemeal narration, the episode is scooped out of the chronological succession of events. Thus it also produces the effect of the story telling itself, for the episode develops as a part of the main action and takes the strain off the shoulders of the narrator. Secondly, the story develops in the course of Harry's developing knowledge just as many real-life accounts are learnt, and secures an additional vividness. Thirdly, we are forced to align ourselves with Harry's immediate point of view, for it comes as part of the impression created in his mind. This would not have been possible had it come as one piece of retrospective narration from Harry in the capacity of a story-teller.

The most representative manipulation of time-locus is seen in the total narrative method of the rather ignored, unfinished work, *The Gentleman of Fifty*, (about 1869; Memorial ed., XXI). The chronology time-span of the story—so far as it goes—covers a little over one month, with occasional, short, indefinite intervals. There are two distinct time planes seen to be operating in the story. One is the narrative time-locus. This, as the consequence of the alternate, first-person narration by 'He' and 'She', is in a state of continuity, consisting in the succession of the moments of narration of the six chapters, and is not static as in all "told" stories. The other is the time-continuum where the narrated events take place. What is more important is that these two time-continua interpenetrate into one another. This can be better understood in the light of the fact that the work does not merely recount the past external events, but, more important, dramatizes the mental movements of the two characters who react to these events. The succession of these mental movements make up an autonomous, and as a matter of fact, the chief story: Pollingray's ("His") realization of his love in old age for a young woman, and Alice's ("Her") gradual awakening to her love of Pollingray. It is against the context of this story that the "other" story of past events assumes its

significance, since these events come to us through the continuous retrospects which the two characters make of the events, after experiencing them. This intersection of the two time-planes is very well illustrated in the alternate movement of the narration in every chapter moving between two tenses : the *present*, which brings out the mental action at particular hours, and the *past*, in which flash-backs are constantly made to the recent events. Finally, the different time-points, in which the mental action progresses, precede as well as succeed the time-points of the recapitulated events, so that the total chronology comes in the form of an alternate succession of the two series.

Thus, the "narrative-time" of chapter I, coming from Pollingray, is obviously sometime after the episode of the Vicar and his wife, since it is retrospectively narrated (pp. 111-24). But this time-point is certainly before the Vicar's party—which took place after more than two weeks (p. 127). This is because here Pollingray's thoughts about Alice do not go beyond his first impression of her in the earlier Vicar-episode (pp. 122-23, 123-24), while his experience of her at the Vicar's party is different, and is suggested to be at a later time (pp. 131, 131-32). Pollingray's next chapter (III) comes definitely after the Vicar's party, judging from his reaction to the "musical laugh" at his expense, which Alice had let off in the party (p. 131). Its time is also the day after another, subsequent party, the happenings of which are recorded in the chapter (pp. 132-35). Now, the narrative time of chapter I suggests the feelings which Pollingray carries into the Vicar's party in the fable-time of chapter II. Similarly, the narrative time of chapter III suggests Pollingray's developing feelings for Alice (pp. 131-32, 135-37), which he carries from the party. Again, chapter II—coming from Alice—, the narrative time of which is in between the two Pollingray chapters (I and III) presents her mental recapitulation not merely of the Vicar's party (pp. 128-31) but also of the Vicar-episode (pp. 126-27). That part of the episode which is given in her narration, complements Pollingray's account in chapter I, thus the Vicar-episode, revolved in two time-loci, is pictured in a round, two dimensional manner.

The narration develops interest from chapter IV onwards. The chapter, narrated by Alice when she is at Dayton Manor after three weeks of her stay there (p.138), first presents her feelings at this time (pp.137-38)—at her receipt of Charles's letter (informing of Pollingray's purpose in inviting her to Dayton Manor). Then, from the same time-point, the narration effects a flash-back to another point three weeks ago, presenting the incidents of three days (pp.138-49), and then comes back to her present time (pp.149-50). The fable-time of chapter VI, in Alice's narration,

almost coincides with the narrative time when she has come back home. It represents a point little less than one month after her visit to Dayton Manor (p.153),¹⁷ where the incidents on the last night and the following morning of her stay at the Manor take place (pp.154-55,156). Since this period of time obviously assimilates her first three weeks at Dayton Manor, her feelings in the narrative present of chapter IV (mentioned above), which covers those weeks, become a part of the history of her stay. Chapter V, narrated by Pollingray, which intervenes in between these two chapters, adds a further interest to the time-pattern. Its narrative time is the last day of Alice's stay at Dayton Manor (p.153), and, therefore, it is fairly co-terminous with the last night in the *fable-time* of chapter VI. At this time Pollingray is thinking of Alice (pp.152-53), just as Alice *was* thinking simultaneously of him, listening to his sister's account of his earlier, frustrated love-affair with Louise (as we learn later from) ch. VI, pp.154-55), this effects a juxtaposition of their mental states. Again, in this chapter the chief subject-matter is Pollingray's present feelings about his earlier affairs with Louise, which took place twenty years ago (pp.150-52), and then about himself and Alice (pp.152-53). It is also important to note that the action during the last night and morning of Alice's stay in Dayton Manor in chapter VI is seen to be chiefly occasioned by her recapitulation of the Louise-affair (pp.154-56), just as the affair becomes the occasion of Pollingray's self-revelation in chapter V (mentioned above). The Louise-affair, thus montaging the two chapters, re-inforces the juxtaposition of Pollingray and Alice. Finally, each at this point has become wide awake to his or her love for the other—though without knowing the other's feelings—(pp. 152, 155-56); this gives a sense of near-completion to the unfinished work, and thereby makes the carefully planned counterpointing of the last two chapters functional to the story's end. The following chart of the chronology of the happenings of the story will help to realize the manipulation of time.

The operation of this double-time-plane of the story which we have seen above, can be summed up in two general conclusions. Firstly, the interaction between the two time-continua dramatizes "telling" as "showing", not at a distance from the story (as say, in *Harry Richmond*) but as part of the story that is being told. Secondly, the dramatized mental states which continually move between the past and the present in every chapter as also in the total narrative chronology makes it produce the same effects as of the developed stream-of-consciousness narration of modern fiction.¹⁸

<i>Time</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Time-Locus</i>	<i>Chapter and Page</i>
Twenty Years age	Pollingray and Louise Affair.	Fable	V, 154-55
1. One day	the Vicar-episode	Fable	VI, 150-51. I, 111-24
2. A certain time	Pollingray's thoughts about Alice in his remembrance of the episode.	Narrative	II, 126-27. I, 111-24
3. More than two weeks after (1) and some-time after (2)	The Vicar's party	Fable	II, 128-31, III, 131 (implied)
4. A certain time after the Vicar's party but before she goes to Dayton Manor	Alice's thoughts.	Narrative.	II, 124-26, 127-28.
5. A certain time after the Vicar's party as well as after the above.	Miss Pollingray's lawn-party.	Fable	III, 132-33, 134-35.
6. The day after the lawn-party	Pollingray's developing love for Alice	Narrative.	III, 131-32, 133-34 135-37.
7. Three successive days, a short time after the lawn party	Events of Alice's stay at Dayton	Fable	IV, 138-50
8. Three weeks after the above	Alice's thoughts, and her manner of spending time at Dayton	Narrative.	IV, 137-38.
9. The day before Alice's departure from Dayton and about one week after the above.	Pollingray's thoughts, esp. his further developing love for Alice	Narrative.	V, 150-53.
10. The night before, and the morning of Alice's departure.	Alice's farewell feelings and developing love for Pollingray, occasioned by Louiseaffair.	Fable	VI, 154-56.
11. A very short time after her departure.	Alice's completely transformed mental state, in love with Pollingray	Narrative.	VI, 153-54.

IV

I now come down to a most interesting aspect of Meredith's treatment of time, namely, his upsetting not merely of chronology but of the very conception of chronological time. This springs from his rendering of "perceptual" or experiential time, meaning thereby time measured by the intensity of personal experiences presented in the novel, as opposed to external or "conceptual" time rendered through universal symbols such as the clock and the calendar.¹⁰

This is to some extent reflected in the presentations of the chronologies of some of the novels. In *Richard Feverel*, for example, the chronology of the six and odd years is measured mainly in relation to Richard's advancing in age, of which the initial focal point is his fourteenth birthday; moreover, this theme of growing up ironically off-sets Sir Austin's hopes in launching Richard into his career (p. 10). The chronology built up in the novel is thus coloured by the theme and does not exist merely to give the sense of a certain length of time. In *Vittoria*, the chronology of the first movement is measured by the 15th September, which stands not just a calendar date but because it is the particular day of the call for an uprising, which is eagerly anticipated by Vittoria even from the beginning (e.g., chs. II-VI) and is emotionally and actively reacted to by all the characters in this phase (chs. VII-XXII). The most interesting case of chronological time standing as an image of fictional experience is, however, in *One of Our Conquerors*, especially noticeable in the rendering of the first year which ends in Victor's catastrophe. It is, however, an awareness of time that comes from the subject-matter of the narrative, stemming largely from characters' consciousnesses—an awareness of the ruthless, tense passage of time chaining one to it. This is especially illustrated by Victor. Now, since Victor's life is a contradiction, his hopes for self-fulfilment can never be secured, and the entire story is seen to be consisting in his perpetual waiting for the realization of his dreams, especially for his release from Mrs. Burman. This endless waiting causes him eternally to count time in expectancy, because, as time flows on, he feels himself unable to master it. For instance, he waits hopelessly for months for the death of Mrs. Burman (e.g., pp. 466.67), he thinks of his long-awaited-for release in time-images (e.g., p. 495), and carefully remembers the time of Mrs. Burman's invitation for "to-morrow, Sunday, four P.M. Odd, that next day at eight in the evening I shall be addressing our meeting" (p. 483). This sensitive time-awareness becomes almost his habit, seen in his consulting the watch every now and then. It is not Victor alone, however, but sometimes other characters, too, who feel themselves chained to the

passage of time, counting minutes, hours and days. This is either because the alliance with Victor pitches them into some vital problem or the other for which they expect a solution, or just because they are apprehensive observers of his activities. The chronology to which we are made so greatly responsive through its detailed presentation thus serves as an analogue of the time-awareness of Victor and others in the story. This experiential determination of chronological time especially in this novel, distinguishes Meredith from most of the earlier time-conscious novelists.

The general tendency towards "perceptual" colouring of time which these chronologies reveal is consummately presented in certain particular contexts where the limitation of time intensifies such experiential presentation. This is found, for instance, in some scenes of gruelling suspense where time moves very slowly (and covers many pages) in correspondence with the emotions of the characters. Such, for instance, is the scene of Diana's "death-chamber" watch (*Diana of the Crossways*, 1885, pp. 223-27) or in Clara's waiting for the train in *The Egoist* (pp. 320-29). It is most remarkable in *One of Our Conquerors* which is a very much "time-charged" book. Most interesting, however, is the narration of Wilfrid captured in Barto Rizzo's cell in *Vittoria*. Having covered the passage of time till January (p. 368) in the opening of the chapter, the narration adopts Wilfrid's point of view, and thereby shows the passage of two months which bridges an area of suspense till the Milanese rising of March (pp. 374-87). The movement here is presented solely in terms of psychological or perceptual time which replaces the clock and the calendar. To Wilfrid, imprisoned in Barto Rizzo's dark chamber where sunlight does not infiltrate, and where there is no clock or watch, external time is not merely slow but at times non-existent. In his desperate desire to catch up with the movement of this time in the outside world, he counts time by the regularity of the lamp and the food brought by Barto Rizzo's wife (p. 380). When even the lamp is taken away from the room, Wilfrid, suffering "from the pressure of the hideous featureless time" (p. 380), is shocked into finding at last from Rinaldo that it is eleven o'clock on a day in the first week of March, and is aghast at the thought that he has been for two months in a shirt (p. 382). The shirt, with its accumulated filth, is now the index of his awareness of time—like the lamp before. This serves also a rhetorical purpose, for it helps to dramatize the time-gap of two months between the Tobacco Riots (pp. 368-74) and the Milanese rising (p. 387 onwards) through the flux of Wilfrid's consciousness. The technique is a striking experiment Meredith made with time, and is also a notable feature of his kinship with twentieth-century novelists.

The next step from this pre-occupation with psychological measuring

of time is Meredith's achievement of timelessness through his presentations of the "epiphany", that is, the highly intensified moment of a sudden spiritual perception, carved out of the general flow of time.³⁰ Moreover, being a poet by temperament, he was impatient with sheer, external realism and as such with external time; since the epiphany is a very poetic vision somewhat akin to the mystical, it must have held a great attraction for him. Even in the instance we noted above from *Vittoria*, Wilfrid achieves something like an epiphany when he realizes the stark flow of time devoid of any external signs, time that is timeless in its flow, while he feels himself "under the pressure of hideous featureless Time" (p.382). Diana's "night watch", also mentioned before, by arresting time out of its ordinary movement (esp. see p. 220), also gives the inkling of an epiphany. However, these are imperfect instances in comparison with Meredith's representative achievements of epiphanic timelessness, of which I shall give three illustrations.

It is noticeable that even from his first novel Meredith started achieving the timeless moment and therefore I shall logically cite my first instance from *Richard Feverel*.³¹ This is the scene of Richard's and Lucy's marriage, continued from the last part of chapter XXIX to the first part of chapter XXX (pp. 299-303). The scene stands prominent in the pitting of timelessness against the ruthlessness of the passage of time. Significant as the crowning of Richard's and also Lucy's anticipation of it (chs. XXVII-XXIX), it is an expression of their feeling of the elemental moment where their hopes are consummated. The effect is created first through references to time which are often imagistic, and through which even the marriage-vow takes on a particular significance. The bride and the groom are "asked to fix all time to the moment" (p. 299). "Firstly the bridegroom tells forth *his words*. *This hour.. at least is his, and that he means to hold him bound through the eternities, men may hear.....* Time hears sentence pronounced on him", and "the frail hands bind his huge limbs and lock the chains" (p. 300). "Time", Lucy feels, "is to be taken by the throat" (p. 302), and while Richard fumbles for the ring which he has lost, "Time ominously shakes his chain" (p. 301). This sense of timelessness is supported by the narration of this scene in what is sometimes a clumsy device but here serves its purpose, that is, the historic present which carries the sense of a continuous, timeless action which is raised above the level of the ordinary run of events (pp.299-302).

The next and more characteristic instance is from *Lord Ormont* (1891.) This is the famous swimming-scene of chapter XXVII (pp.319-25), where Matthew and Aminta swim together in the sea, the former making

a bid to escape from Lord Ormont. It is a scene of ecstasy, where the two consummately recapture their old and lost love. At first the mood is conveyed through symbolism, the swimming standing for their act of leaving the conventions of society ("land") :

The swim was a holiday ; all was new—nothing came to her as the same old thing since she took her plunge ; she had a sea-mind—had left her earth mind ashore(p. 320).

The swim, in its "delirium" of joy, thus effects a "magical" transformation of her mind, which happens also to Matthew (*ibid.*), so that they shake off their conventionalities ; as they swim parallel to one another as comrades they declare their love which is revived accross the period of their separation a long while ago (pp. 320-22). The time of the swim is thus a unique, eternal time different from the usual time marked by obedience to customs and conventions.⁸² But apart from these implicatons, the timeless quality is directly brought out in the bits of dialogue in terms of time between the two :

We've said, adieu to land. Not to one another. We shall be friends.

'Always.'

'This is going to last ?'

'Ever so long.' (p. 322 italics mine.)

And later,

'Try to beguile me then, that our holiday's not over. You won't forget *this hour* ?'

'No time of mine on earth will live so *brightly* for me.'
(p. 324, italics mine.)

For one thing, this sense of "ever so long" and the "unforgettability" of the "brightest time" pervades the scene through its poetry, and produces the effect of the timelessness of the particular moment. But this is not all, and the "epiphany" is further achieved in a heightened manner in another part of their conversation in which they address each other as "Brownny" and "Matey", their love-names in school-days. Their present, adult identities as Aminta and Matthew thus drop off, as they re-live their school-days in their ecstasy in terms of the symbolic associations, of these days (p. 321). Finally, the epiphany rises to a climax in Aminta's interior monologue, "Was he unaware that they were boy and girl again ?—*she washed pure of the intervening years, new born by blessing of the sea*" (p. 323, italics mine). The images are obvious, and require no explanation.

The most striking instance of Meredith's achievement of the eternal

moment is in an internal monologue, one of the most powerful not only in Meredith's novels but in all fiction. This occurs in the "expiation"-scene at Mrs. Burman's chamber in *One of Our Conquerors* (ch.XL).²² Here the awareness of time arrives at its most intense stage near the end of the first year of the novel. Confronting the dying Mrs. Burman, his "destiny", Victor is choked with his feelings, and the situation ponderously continues for ten suspense-packed minutes, determined by Victor's acute sense of the slow passage of time :

More than a minute of the terrible length of the period of torture had gone : two, if not three.

* * *

Another minute must have gone in the silence.

* * *

They were certainly now on the five minutes. (pp.487-88)

As, thus, Victor keeps counting the time minute by minute, Mrs. Burman starts a prayer, and after that, suddenly, in a moment of reverie, time ceases to be, and images of timelessness re-incarnate his past life through his memory :

It [the prayer] acted on him like the silent spell of service in a Church. *He forgot his estimate of the minute*, he formed a prayer, *he refused to hear the Cupid* [Mrs. Burman's clock] *swinging*, he droned a sound of sentences to deaden his ears. *Ideas of eternity rolled in semblance of enormous clouds...* The gold and white of the chairs welcomed a youth suddenly enrolled among the wealthy by an enamoured old lady. Cupid tickticked.. Plunging through a wave of the scent of Marechale, that was a tremendous memory to haul him backward and forward, he beheld his prayer dancing across the furniture ; By merely looking at Nataly, he passed into her prayer. A look at Mrs. Burman made it personal, his own...(pp. 488-89, italics mine.)

Thus indeed time conquers itself in the perfect moment of timelessness which strongly resembles the Joycean epiphany and Virginia Woolf's "moments of being". We understand this best by noting what we may call the vertical journey of time, that runs across the horizontal chronology. True to the nature of an epiphany, the moment carries the entire pressure of Victor's past, through which he has been tensely waiting for his release from Mrs. Burman and counting time. Even since he was twenty years old, he has been climbing in Society, planning his release (see e. g , p. 32) ; for the past one year (immediately previous to the first year of the novel ; see, e.g., p. 14), he has been maturing his scheme for release ; in the course of the present year he has been furthering it

gradually towards the anticipated climax (as the action of the novel upto the present chapter shows) ; for the past forty-five minutes, since quarter to three on this Sunday in April (pp. 483-86), he has been preparing himself for the final show-down with Mrs. Burman ; for the past five minutes, he has been going through the ordeal of his life-time and counting the agonized minutes : then, in this sudden moment of revelation, release comes not only from Mrs. Burman but also from the tyranny of time and external barriers. Now he forgets the estimate of minutes, his life-long habit, as his being is submerged into the consciousness of eternity. The ten past four on April Sunday thus becomes the zero-hour of his entire spiritual life.²⁸

V

Several points have to be stated for the necessary summing-up. That the starting point of this discussion of Meredith's handling of time has had to be chronology, stems from the fact that he is lodged in the solid, fictional tradition established by Fielding and Richardson. At the same time, however, he remarkably anticipates the treatment of time, as we have seen, of later novelists like Conrad, James, and Joyce—as a matter of fact, heavily leaning towards them. Then, the vast range of his time-scale is no doubt indicated by the function of time in his novels, often intermingling with one another : organic chronology, continuity, modulation, time-shift, manipulation of the time-locus, experiential colouring of chronology, timelessness—the range will be further extended if we remember the poetic symbolism implicit in all this. Finally, what is most important, this impressive array of functions are not to be mistaken as mechanical tools or ends-in-themselves. They are as we have seen, vital means of controlling as well as awakening the reader's response to the subject-matter of his stories and quite often part of the subject-matter as well. Surely, this rhetorical function of time in his novels has a more than ordinary appeal for the twentieth-century sensibility.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *The Rise of the Novel*, Penguin Books, 1963, p. 23.
2. Some other instances of Chronology in Meredith's novels are indicated in the later pages ; apart from them, the following can also be mentioned : *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), e.g., pp. 44-5, 50, 84, 93, 161, 168, 169, 211, 212, 237, 247, 260, 269, 306, 307, 336, 352, 432, 436, 457, 492,—seven-odd years ; *The Amazing Marriage* (1895), e.g., pp. 11, 14, 41, 132, 134, 237, 268, 272, 282, 298, 349, 351, 353—nearly nine years, prefaced by a panoramic twenty-four years.
3. *Aspects of the Novel*, London, 1958, p. 31.

4. Thus A.A. Mendilow refers to this as "texture" in respect of James and Proust (*Time and the Novel*, London, 1952 p. 73), and J.W. Beach to the late nineteenth-century use of this in Dostoevsky (*The Twentieth Century Novel*, New York, 1932, p. 160.)

5. This, and other instances given in this essay disprove Beach's contention that in this type of continuity Dostoevsky has no parallel before Joyce (*ibid.*) ; Beach does not mention Meredith.

6. More instances will be incidentally seen in course of the discussion in the following pages.

7. Some other characteristic instances of continuous days and day-"suites" are as follows : *Beauchamp's Career* (1875), pp. 51-68 (one day), 68-92 (two days), 205-238 (three days), 444-84 (one day), 527-47 (one day) ; *Diana*, pp. 94-138 (one day), 212-28 (one day) ; *The Amazing Marriage*, pp. 87-138 (two and a half days), 193-209 (about one and a half days), 210-28 (three days), 319-47 (two days.) In the discussion of time in *The Egoist*, *One of Our Conquerors*, and *Vittoria* below, many more interesting instances are to be found.

8. This is how the eight days are presented : (1) pp. 146-71, (2) pp. 171-234, (3) pp. 243-76, (4) pp. 287-94, (5) pp. 295-386, (6) pp. 386-496, (7) pp. 496-613, (8) pp. 613-25. For the points where the days merge into the next ones, see pp. 171, 243, 287, 294, 386, 496, 613.

9. I have explained and indicated these eleven "structures" in my essay, "Time and Continuity in Meredith's *One of Our Conquerors*", *Bulletin of the Department of English*, Calcutta University, NS, 11, 2, 1966-67, pp. 54-5, 62-3.

10. This may be interestingly contrasted with the "looking forward" of the ending of *Vanity Fair*.

11. *The Amazing Marriage* offers another very remarkable instance of continuity, though of a different type.

12. Which usually goes unnoticed in critics' emphasis on the historical 1848.

13. The chronologies of *The Egoist* and *One of Our Conquerors*, mentioned above, show more examples of modulation.

14. For various other examples of chronological upsetting, see Evan Harrington, chs. XLIV, XLV, XLVI (esp. pp. 548, 558, 559-60, 562, 563) ; Sandra Belloni (1864), chs. XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX (see esp. pp. 278, 288, 289, 290) ; chs. XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIV (esp. pp. 331, 333-47, 348-49) ; *The Egoist*, chs. I, II, III (esp. pp. 10, 16, 17, 21-3, 25) ; chs. XL, XLI (esp. 482, 494) ; chs. XXXIV, XLII (esp. pp. 480, 511-12, 513-14, 514-24) ; *Diana*, chs. XXXII-XXXIII (esp. pp. 368-75, 375-77) ; *One of Our Conquerors*, chs. V-VI, VII (esp. pp. 58, 71) ; chs. XX (pp. 229-37), XXI-XXII (esp. pp. 238, 242) ; chs. XXXI-XXXIV, XXXV (esp. pp. 414, also p. 412) ; *Lord Ormont* (1892), pp. 197-203, 203-5 ; chs. XIX, XX (esp. pp. 229-38, 238-42) ; *The Amazing Marriage*, pp. 185-228 (esp. p. 185.)

15. I borrow this term from Mendilow, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

16. E. g. pp. 192, 216, 263-64, 265-66.

17. Whereby one sees that the gap between the narrative time-points of chs. IV and VI is less than a week.

18. Several other instances of various kinds of manipulation of time-locus are as follows : *Richard Feverel*, pp. 1, 10 ; *Vittoria*, pp. 626, 627-28 ; pp. 95, 203, 278, 329, 341, 443-46 ; *Harry Richmond*, pp. 197-200 ; *Diana*, ch. I (esp. p. 1), II ; *One*

of *our Conquerors*, pp. 403-8, 438-40 : *The Amazing Marriage*, chs. I-III (esp. pp. 32-3), IV.

19. See Mondilow, *op.cit* , p.64 for these terms.

20. For a good exposition of the epiphanic moment in fiction, I would refer to Giorgio Melchiori. "The Moment as a Time-unit in *Modern Fiction*", *Essays in Criticism*, III(1953), pp. 434-46, and Leon Edel, *The Psychological Novel, 1900-1950*, London, 1961, p.95.

21. I should like to point out that a possible influence of the epiphanies of *Richard Feverel* on the Joycean epiphany is suggested by Ellworth Mason and Richard Ellman in *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, London, 1959, p.88.

22. I have briefly discussed this moment as well as the earlier instance of chronological looping in this novel, in my essay on *One of Our Conquerors*, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-6.

23. This no doubt resembles the Joycean epiphany and Virginia Woolf's "moments of being", of course in its own way. Among many other instances of Meredith's epiphanies, the following can be mentioned : *Richard Feverel*, p. 120 ; pp. 153,154, also p.166 ; p.171, p. 523 ; p. 551 : *Sandra Belloni*, p. 200 ; *Vittoria*, pp. 318-19 : p. 183 ; *Chloe* (*Memorial ed*, XXI), pp. 9-10 : *Lord Ormont*, p. 292.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW : A REVIEW

BISHNUPADA BERA

Back to G.B.S., an extravaganza by E. M. Barling, was broadcast at the Malvern Festival on 15 November 1932. It has a characteristic situation. The Shade of Shaw says to the Shade of Shakespeare : "I won the cap and bells of a fool, and japed and jested to make men hear me. I bade them search a quip for the truth behind it, but they laughed at the bitter truth, and were dumbly respectful to the jest."¹ This is but an echo of what George Bernard Shaw himself wrote to Florence Farr on January 28, 1892 : "It is by jingling the bell of a jester's cap that I, like Heine, make people listen to me."² Both the extravaganza and the letter to Farr point to the same thing—the dramatic device adopted by George Bernard Shaw to reach the people. George Bernard Shaw was the greatest comic dramatic artist since Moliere. Armed with the rapier of wit and Puckish humour he had presented a panoramic satire on contemporary society by writing plays on the principles of rationalism and critical rebellion. As the greatest critic of his age, he pitched his dramatic aspirations very high. "Either I shall be remembered as a playwright as long as Aristophanes and rank with Shakespeare and Moliere, or I shall be forgotten clown before the end of the century,"³ he observed, when he refused the Order of Merit, offered by the Labour Government. His dream came true. He won recognition as a "world-dramatist"⁴ ; and in this he shared with Ibsen the romance of a fairy-tale fate. He emerged from obscurity by "sheer gravitation" and fought his way to fame as a world-famous playwright. A study of his evolution as a dramatic artist and thinker should, therefore, be significant.

The only son and the youngest child of George Carr Shaw, George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin on July 26, 1856. Himself a "downstart and the son of a downstart" (*Prefaces*, p. 659), he showed no promise as a student. Even as a child he cared little for the conventional mode of teaching; he would enrich his mind in his own way. He had an absorbing passion for music and painting. His boyhood dream was to be a painter or an opera singer. He would be found prowling in the Dublin National Gallery to study the masterpieces of the old masters. Music, the other strong pull in his nature, was in his blood, as the Shaws were a "musical family" (*Prefaces*, p. 661). The musical atmosphere at home, maintained by his mother and her teacher, G. J. Lee, fed his passion for music, which was

to play a significant role in his later life—as a musical critic and as a playwright, in whose operatic approach to plays the “music of ideas”⁵ was the golden thread running through all. In fact, Shaw himself declared that he learned his art from “the masters of a universal language—Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner.”⁶ In his boyhood the other sides of his questioning mind were also duly attended to. He learnt French history from the novels of Alexandre Dumas *pere* and English history from Shakespeare and Walter Scott. Though he profited little by what the school professed to teach, he was “highly educated” in his own way; for he “could sing and whistle from end to end leading works by Handel, Hayden, Mozart, Beethoven, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi” and he was “saturated with English literature, from Shakespeare and Bunyan to Byron and Dickens.” (*Prefaces*, p. 858). At the same time he was susceptible to the beauty of nature.

Thus Bernard Shaw equipped himself mentally and intellectually. Two other things associated with his boyhood offer a clue to the understanding of his character. The Shaws “did not bother about conventionalities or sentimentalities” (*Prefaces*, p. 661). So Bernard Shaw from his boyhood came to be unsentimental and defiant of social conventions. His uncle Walter, “an artist in his obscenity and blasphemy” (*Prefaces*, p. 667) spoke of holy things with utmost levity. This worked on his mind and destroyed his “inculcated childish reverence for the verbiage of religion, for its legends and personifications and parables” (*Prefaces*, p. 667). All these combined to encourage his “youthful and very irritating system of contradicting everyone,” (*Prefaces*, p. 679) from whom he thought he could learn anything.

Schooling ended, Bernard Shaw, with his mind stored with varied ideas and impressions, thought of earning something at thirteen or thereabouts. He sought employment in a cloth merchant’s firm in Dublin, but he was found “too young” for the post. A year later or thereabouts he was appointed an “office boy” in the Valuation Office, Dublin and he worked at the Desk for four years and a half. Though he was promoted to the post of the Cashier of the firm, the nature of the work did not suit his independent temperament. So he threw up the appointment in March, 1876, and migrated to London, the land of Shakespeare, whom he “had unconsciously resolved to reincarnate” (*Prefaces*, p. 660) from his cradle.

In London where his mother and sister had been turning their musical attainments to account, he remained dependent on his mother’s income till 1885, when his “penury phase was over” (*Prefaces*, p. 676). Though “an unemployable,” he ghosted for Lee as a musical critic for *The Hornet* in 1876 till its death in October, 1877. The year 1879 is a finger-post in his

life. This year dates the beginning of his career as a novelist. *Immaturity*, his first novel, was written between March 1879 and 28 September 1879. The second important incident of the year was his acquaintance with James Lecky, who made him a member of the Zetetical Society. Subsequently, Shaw became a member of the Dialectical Society. To get over his initial shyness and nervousness he actively participated in debates on all subjects. The dialectical skill, thus acquired, was of great use to him in writing discussion dramas as a playwright. The third incident of the year was his appointment in the Way Leave Department of the Edison Telephone Company in November, 1879. This company, however, was swallowed up by the Bell Telephone Company on June 1, 1880; hereupon his "career as a commercial employee" came to a close. He could not devote himself entirely to literary pursuits. The four other novels of his "novage" came in rapid succession—*The Irrational Knot* (1880), *Love Among the Artists* (1881), *Cashel Byron's Profession* (1882), and *An Unsocial Socialist* (1883). He had no success as a novelist. No publisher in London and America would venture on his novels in view of his "hostility to respectable Victorian thought and Society". (*Prefaces*, p. 676).

While constant refusals forced him into "a fierce self-sufficiency", some formative influences were at work on his mind. In 1881 he came under the influence of Shelley and became a vegetarian. On 5 September he heard Henry George, the author of *Progress and Poverty* (1879), lecture on the necessity of nationalising the land. This speech "was a revelation" and it changed the whole course of his life. The influence of Henry George on Shaw remained unabated, till he read the French translation of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* in the British Museum. Here (in the winter of 1882-83)⁸ he met William Archer who subsequently became his life-long friend and exerted the deepest influence on his career by pointing the direction in which his genius lay. Bernard Shaw himself acknowledged his indebtedness to William Archer in his Preface to *London Music 1888-90*. Referring to "the nine years of shabby genteel destitution during which" his "attempts to gain a footing in literature were a complete and apparently hopeless failure" (*Prefaces*, p. 852), Shaw observed: "I was rescued from this condition by William Archer, who transferred some of his book reviewing work to me, and pushed me into a post as picture critic which had been pushed on him, and for which he considered himself unqualified, as in fact he was. So, as reviewer for the old *Pall Mall Gazette* and picture critic for Edmund Yate's then fashionable weekly, *The World*, I carried on until I found an opening which I can explain only by describing the musical side of my childhood which was of cardinal importance in my education." (*Prefaces*, p. 852).

The reference here is to his appointment as musical critic for *The Star* (1888-90) over the pseudonym Corno di Bassetto. He was now in his element. So, from 1890-94 he remained the musical critic for *The World* and his profound knowledge of music astounded all concerned. In the capacity of dramatic critic for *The Saturday Review* (1895-98) Bernard Shaw was a breaker of idols, quite in keeping with his crusade for Ibsen and his intellectual drive for the newest form of approach to things—a mission to which he pledged himself for setting the British theatre in tune with the intellectual movement abroad.

It would be significant to note here that the two major influences on Bernard Shaw in the eighteen-nineties besides William Archer, were Karl Marx and Henrik Ibsen. "Karl Marx made a man of me"⁹ Shaw declared on his seventieth birth-day. In fact, a study of *Das Kapital* convinced him of the economic basis of society and this conviction remained a potent influence throughout his career as a playwright. Shaw himself observed : "In all my plays my economic studies have played as important a part as a knowledge of anatomy does in the works of Michael Angelo."¹⁰ Ibsen exerted as deep an influence on Shaw as Marx and Wagner. Janet Achurch's performance of *A Doll's House* on June 7, 1889, left so profound an impression on Shaw's mind that commenting on the far-reaching significance of Nora's daring he observed : "The slam of the door behind her is more momentous than the cannon of Waterloo or Sedan"¹¹; but the novelty of the play "as a morally original study of a marriage did not stagger" him "as it staggered Europe" (*Prefaces*, p. 689) and "shell-shocked"¹² his British contemporaries ; for he had already been "taken far outside the bounds of middle-class idealism"¹³ by Karl Marx. He "rejoiced in it, and watched the ruin and havoc it made among the idols and temples of the idealists as a young correspondent watches the bombardment of the unhealthy quarters of a city".¹⁴ It should be noted here that Shaw wrote a prose sequel to *A Doll's House* under the caption "Still after the Doll's House" which appeared in *Time*, February, 1890. Shaw delivered an illuminating address before the Fabian Society on 18 July 1890. This was published in 1891 as *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* which formed, in reality, a prelude to his own dramatic career, opening with the premiere of *Widowers' Houses* on 9 December 1892 at the Royalty Theatre.

It was William Archer who turned Shaw's genius to playwriting. William Archer was "a born constructor", while Shaw's dialogue was "incomparable". The two friends, therefore, agreed to collaborate in writing a comedy on condition that Archer would furnish the plot and Shaw, the dialogue. Archer "drew out, scene by scene, the scheme of a twaddling cup-and-saucer comedy vaguely suggested by Augier's *Ceinture Doree*."

After about six weeks Shaw said to Archer, "Look here, I've written half the first act of that comedy, and I've used up all your plot. Now I want some more to go on with". (*Prefaces*, p. 699). Shaw had written the play in his own way ; this upset Archer's plan. On his failure to furnish fresh plot, the collaboration ended; but Shaw finished the drama in his own way. Such is the genesis of *Widowers' Houses*, which was produced by J. T. Grein at the Royalty Theatre.

As early as 1881 when Shaw wrote *Love Among the Artists*, a novel with a purpose, he felt that "his destiny was to educate London";¹⁵ but in the eighties he was simply groping for an adequate means of self-expression. With the production of *Widowers' Houses*, however, he found himself. He came to pin his faith on the theatre as a "social organ" (*Prefaces*, p. 731) and the most effective means of forcing "the public to reconsider its morals" (*Prefaces*, p. 410). By using "shock tactics"¹⁶ he resolved to open the eyes of the self-complacent British people to reality, stripped of the veils of romance and illusion. "I can no longer be satisfied", he declared, "with fictitious morals and fictitious good conduct, shedding fictitious glory on robbery, starvation, disease, crime, drink, war, cruelty, cupidity, and all the other commonplaces of civilization which drive men to the theatre to make foolish pretences that such things are progress, science, morals, religion, patriotism, imperial supremacy, national greatness and all the other names the newspapers call them" (*Prefaces*, p. 734). He would make the people think in order "to bring them to conviction of sin" (*Prefaces*, p. 150); he would make the readers uncomfortable by directing his attacks against them and not against his "stage figures" (*Prefaces*, p. 727), so that the audience and the readers alike might "feel like guilty creatures sitting at a play". Thus his thoroughly revolutionary approach to life made each of his plays a distinct challenge to time-honoured conventions; as he handled questions on various issues—"slum-landlordism, doctrinaire Free Love (pseudo-Ibsenism), prostitution, militarism, marriage, history, current politics, natural Christianity, national and individual character, paradoxes of conventional society, husband-hunting, questions of conscience, professional delusions and impostures". (*Prefaces*, p. 545).

Thus *Widowers' Houses* is "a grotesquely realistic exposure of slum landlordism" (*Prefaces*, p. 719) and *The Philanderer* (1893), of "the grotesque sexual compacts made between men and women". (*Prefaces*, p. 726). In *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1894) he drew attention to the appalling truth that "prostitution is caused, not by female depravity and male licentiousness, but simply by underpaying, undervaluing and overworking women so shamefully that the poorest of them are forced to resort to prostitution to keep body and soul together." (*Prefaces* p. 219).

These satiric plays were published as *Plays Unpleasant*, because "their dramatic power is used to force the spectator to face unpleasant facts." (*Prefaces*, p.726). The next four plays—*Arms and the Man* (1894), *Candida* (1894), *The Man of Destiny* (1895) and *You Never Can Tell* (1896) were labelled *Plays Pleasant*, because they deal "less with crimes of society, and more with its romantic follies and with the struggles of individuals against these follies". (*Prefaces*, p.727). In *Arms and the Man*, an anti-romantic comedy, the romantic ideas of love and heroism are laughed to scorn. *Candida* envisages a new order of society in which "the bread-winner acknowledges his dependence"¹⁷ on the lady of the house. *The Man of Destiny* is a comedy about Napoleon. *You Never Can Tell*, a drawing-room comedy, indicates the irresistible working of the Life Force, as Gloria puts it: "As if Nature, after letting us belong to ourselves and do what we judge right and reasonable for all these years, were suddenly lifting her great hand to take us—her two little children—by the scruffs of our little necks, and use us, in spite of ourselves, for her own purposes, in her own way, (Act II).

Bernard Shaw then published *Three Plays for Puritans: The Devil's Disciple* (1896), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1897) and *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* (1898). They were so labelled, because the author sedulously excluded from the plays the element of sensuousness "which was at once the fetish and the stock-in-trade of plays churned out for the commercial theatre."¹⁸ The turn of the century marked the beginning of a period of Shaw's great creativity which established him as a premier British dramatist. It should be significant to note here that Ibsen, who had dominated the British stage in the 'nineties, went out of fashion by 1902, as noted by the *Daily Telegraph*: "It is a curious, and in a sense, significant fact that Ibsen's works have of late completely disappeared from the stage."¹⁹ This was so because the new theatre had transferred its allegiance to the new master of British drama, George Bernard Shaw. This accounts for Shaw's immense popularity, dating from the Barker-Vedrenne management of the Court Theatre (1904-7), during which 11 of Shaw's plays were given 701 performances.

In the first decade of the new century Shaw's plays came in dazzling succession. *Admirable Bashville* (1900) is a dramatized version of his popular novel, *Cashel Byron's Profession* in blank verse. *Man and Superman* (1901-3) shows how at the suggestion of A.B. Walkley Shaw turned the legend of Don Juan into a parable of Creative Evolution. *John Bull's Other Island* (1904) is a play on the question of Irish Home Rule, showing a contrast between Irish dreams and English philistine efficiency. *How He Lied to Her Husband* (1904) is a little piece of farce

and the first of Shaw's plays to be filmed. *Major Barbara* (1905), an anti-romantic thrust at the traditional concept of philanthropy and meliorism, is, in effect, a plea for the abolition of poverty as the greatest curse on mankind. *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906) is a satire on medical profession and discusses the relative merits of a gifted artist without moral scruples and a mediocre good man. *Getting Married* (1908) is a non-stop discussion on marriage from all points of view, conventional and unconventional, religious and secular. *The Shewing up of Blanco Posnet* (1909) is a melodrama, showing man's place in God's plan of creation. *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets* (1910) is a plea for the Shakespeare National Memorial Theatre. *Misalliance* (1910) is a long debate on the relations between parents and children.

Shaw's dramatic creativity remained unabated till 1949. In 1911 was produced *Fanny's First Play*, a pot-boiler and a trenchant satire on middle-class respectability, as Shaw himself observed : "I hate to see dead people walking about: it is unnatural. And our respectable middle-class people are all as dead as mutton." (*Prefaces*, p. 138). *Overruled* (1912) is a farce on marital infidelity, calling upon men and women to fit their moral codes to their nature. *Androcles and the Lion* (1912), a "fable play" and a comedy on saintliness, preaches the deepest truths of religion through Ferrovius's acts to meet an emergency. In *Pygmalion* (1912) the story of Pygmalion and Galatea is retold in modern terms to show that the differences in speech are in a large measure responsible for the superficial class distinctions, because a flower girl, if properly trained in speech, may easily be passed off as a Duchess. The other remarkable play of Shaw in the second decade of the century is *Heartbreak House* (1919), a "Fantasia" in the manner of Tchekhov's *Cherry Orchard* and *Uncle Vanya*. It is a comedy of social disruption which pictures England on the eve of the First World War as a ship drifting on the rocks, because the skipper "lies drinking on his bunk and trusts to Providence" (Act III)—a predicament in which the knowledge of navigation is the one thing needful to avert the disaster. This play was succeeded by *Back to Methuselah* (1921), Shaw's second parable of Creative Evolution, divided into five distinct sections—(a) In the Beginning (b) The Gospel of Brothers Barnabas (c) The Thing Happens (d) The Tragedy of Elderly Gentlemen (e) As Far As Thought Can Reach.

Though by this time Shaw's reputation as a playwright had been established, it is the production of *Saint Joan* (1923), Shaw's most popular and most appealing "chronicle play", which won him recognition as a World-dramatist. The year 1926 firmly sealed his world renown with the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature. His dramatic powers, however, were now on the wane. "My sands are running out", Shaw wrote at the end

of the Preface to *Back to Methuselah*. *Saint Joan* was perhaps the last bright flicker of the dying lamp. All his dramas from 1929 to 1949 may be classified as the "dramas of dotage"²⁰ and have little of the unbearable glare of the dramas of his prime. In 1929 was produced *The Apple Cart*, a political extravaganza, in which he upset the apple cart of democracy and royalty. This play was succeeded by two other political extravaganzas—*Too True to be Good* (1932) and *On the Rocks* (1933). In 1934 was produced *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isle*, Shaw's third parable of the Creative Evolution, in which "an investigation of our personal social values" for the "liquidation" of "the social nuisance" (*Prefaces*, p. 642) is urged. *The Millionairess* (1936) suggests that it is personal dash alone to take chance and venture into the unknown which raises a man from obscurity to eminence. In *Cymbeline Refinished* (1937) Shaw rewrote the last act of *Cymbeline* in Shakespeare's verse pattern "as Shakespeare might have written it if he had been post-Ibsen and post-Shaw instead of post-Marlowe" (*Prefaces*, p. 870). The plays that followed are *Geneva* (1938), a satire on the League of Nations; *In Good King Charles's Days* (1939), a "true history that never happened"; *Buoyant Billions*, a comedy of manners (1947); *Far Fetched Fables*; *Shakes versus Shaw*, a puppet play (1949). Shaw's last dramatic writing, *Why She Would Not*, was an unfinished scenario, because Death rang the curtain down upon his most eventful career on November 2, 1950.

Bernard Shaw was the greatest intellectual and moral force in modern drama since Ibsen, and as such it should be significant to review, in brief, his peculiarities as a dramatic artist and thinker. It is the voice of Shaw that ring clear when Aubrey says: "I am by nature and destiny a preacher...I must find the way of life, for myself and all of us...I must preach and preach and preach no matter how late the hour and how short the day, no matter whether I have nothing to say".²¹ It is Shaw's profession of dramatic creed. Shaw really found "the way of life" for the British people by shocking them out of their dangerous self-conceit and their conventional, hide-bound ways of thinking. "It annoys me to see people comfortable when they ought to be uncomfortable" (*Prefaces*, p. 150), he said. He therefore, forced them to wake up to their social responsibilities. He took the theatre as a battering ram to shatter the emotional basis of the western civilization. He sought to convert the nation to his ways of thinking by showing things up and he found in comedy the most effectual means of destroying old-fashioned morals. So, it was, he says as Punch that he emerged from obscurity. He first caught the ear of the British people as "a natural-born mountebank" (*Prefaces*, p. 744), as a demagogue. "The cart and trumpet for me", (*Prefaces*, p. 745) he asserted. His experience

as a public speaker had convinced him that the people would most relish the sugar-coated pills. To tell the bitterest truths with impunity he, therefore, was "ambitious for a motley coat".²² He explained his method in his own way : "In order to get a hearing it was necessary for me to obtain the footing of a privileged lunatic, with the licence of a jester. My method is to take the utmost trouble to find the right thing to say, and then to say it with the utmost levity."²³ His "way of joking" was "to tell the truth"²⁴ and when he told the bitterest truth as in *Common Sense about War* he was simply taken as a funny man, joking in his usual way.

To shock men out of the old grooves of thought Shaw laid siege to the bastilles of conventional morals. "If I make you laugh at yourself", Shaw declared, "remember that my business as a classic writer of comedies is 'to chasten morals with ridicule'; and if I sometimes make you feel like a fool, remember that I have by the same action cured your folly, just as the dentist cures your toothache by pulling out your tooth. And I never do it without giving you plenty of laughing gas."²⁵ In his comic methods he was at once a follower of Aristophanes and of Moliere. "Master, shall I begin the usual jokes. That the audience always laugh at"—these opening lines of *The Frogs* show the comic method of Aristophanes, whom Shaw appears to have followed not only in his method of joking but also in the characteristic conversational form and plotlessness of his comedies.²⁶ Moliere's influence upon his dramatic methods appears to have been more profound, as he himself admits, "Moliere's technique and mine is the technique of the circus, with its ring master discussing the topics of the day with the clown."²⁷

Shaw discarded the "well made play" formula and showed his aversion for a "plot-play", though many of his plays were constructed musically rather than mechanically. He wrote "comedies of manners in the classic fashion", as he admitted in preface to *Back to Methuselah*. Two reasons are available for his preference for the classic fashion, "I find that the surest way to startle the world with daring innovations and originalities, "explained Shaw," is to do exactly what playwrights have been doing for thousands of years ; to revive the ancient attraction of long rhetorical speeches ; to stick closely to the methods of Moliere ; and to lift characters bodily out of the pages of Charles Dickens."²⁸ Secondly, he wrote in the classical manner for those who paid for admission to the theatre, because they liked "classical comedy or tragedy for its own sake", and if well done, they would "stand in queues outside the theatre door for hours beforehand in bitingly cold weather to secure a seat". (*Prefaces*, p. 633). He always cast his "plays in the ordinary practical comedy form in use at all the theatres" (*Prefaces*, p.730)

—melodrama, opera and extravaganza, but the touch of his genius had transmuted them all when they appeared in the characteristic Shavian dress. It was, however, not primarily as a story-teller that he held his audience spell-bound; it was the thought-content of his plays—the startlingly new approach to all ideas, the new wine he poured into old bottles—which lured them to his theatre of ideas in spite of the “siren sounds” of the fashionable theatres with only one subject for entertainment—“clandestine adultery” (*Prefaces*, p. 545). He had “no taste for what is called popular art, no respect for popular morality, no belief in popular religion, no admiration for popular heroics.” (*Prefaces*, p. 716). His plays were “built to induce, not voluptuous reverie but intellectual interest, not romantic rhapsody but humane concern.”²⁹ Thus critical realism, which formed the very essence of his plays, or the “truth-to-life” which underlay his dramas in spite of the conventions on the surface was his distinct contribution to the British theatre for an intellectual awakening in the eighteen-nineties. His subtle use of the methods of paradox and “surprise attack” for reducing to absurdity the conventional views of the wiseacres on life and its problems won him recognition as “the most extravagantly humorous paradoxer in London”. (*Prefaces*, p. 717).

As the father of the theatre of ideas in London, he fashioned a new form of unemotional, anti-romantic comedy—a comedy of ideas, of “purposeful laughter”, of intellectual conflict, debate and discussion. Of action in common parlance there is little or none in his plays; yet the interplay of ideas or animated discussion which characterizes his dramas is as exciting as the material action and the blood and thunder of the most boisterous of the comedies, then in vogue. Thus *Getting Married* and *Misalliance* are all talks; yet they enjoyed immense popularity on the stage. Taking his cue from the finale of *A Doll’s House* Shaw made discussion the soul of his dramas. In fact, the element of discussion so dominates his plays that these may be summed up as “interesting chats about things in general” (*Man and Superman*, Act III). All through his dramatic career Shaw was nothing other than a conversationalist. Lady Britomart says to Undershaft: “Stop making speeches, Andrew. This is not the place for them.” Undershaft’s reply is characteristic. “My dear, I have no other means of conveying my ideas.” (*Major Barbara*, Act III). Here Undershaft merely voices the feelings of Shaw himself.

It was by using his dialectical skill that Shaw sought to convert the nation to his ways of thinking on society and the theatre. He put out of countenance “the sweet-shop view of the theatre”. (*Prefaces*, p. 546). Reviewing the theatre of his days Shaw said to Archibald Henderson,

"Remember that the British theatre was forbidden to touch politics or religion, or to say a single word about sex. Crime and lust and horse-play, deprived of all moral significance or psychological analysis, were its only permitted alternatives to conventional romance."⁸⁰ Following the lead of Ibsen he built his plays not on "conventional ethics and romantic logic" (*Prefaces*, p. 752) but on "a really scientific natural history" (*Prefaces*, p. 198) and discussed on the stage all the taboo subjects. "I am a specialist in immoral and heretical plays," (*Prefaces*, p. 410) he boldly asserted. His persistent struggle was to force the public to think for "a transvaluation of all values".⁸¹ It was the change of hearts that he ever desired. "When a comedy is performed, it is nothing to me that the spectators laugh: any fool can make the audience laugh. I want to see how many of them, laughing or grave, are in the melting mood." (*Prefaces*, p. 733). As a prophet of the thinking theatre Shaw diverted the powers of the theatre to the services of the realistic imagination and changed the British theatre from "a place of amusement" to "a place of edification" (*Prefaces*, p. 736)—a "factory of thought"⁸².

Shaw's attitude to the theatre was quite in keeping with his Puritan spirit. Shaw was a Puritan turned playwright. "I have, I think, always been a Puritan in my attitude towards Art," (*Prefaces*, p. 743) he used to observe. A "born iconoclast" as he professed himself to be, his Puritanical zeal in following the banner of life made him ruthless in his work of destruction of the dead mass of conventions. "It is an instinct with me", he once said, "to attack every idea which has been full grown for ten years, especially if it claims to be the foundation of all human society."⁸³ It is a pity, Undershaft argues, that the world "scraps its obsolete steam engines and dynamos," but "it won't scrap its old prejudices and its old moralities and its old religions and its old political constitutions." (*Major Barbara*, Act III). So the spirit of iconoclasm underlies Shaw's prefatory comment on *Fanny's First Play*: "...the young had better have their souls awakened by disgrace, capture by the police, and a month's hard labour, than drift along from their cradles to their graves doing what other people do for no other reason than that other people do it."

If Shaw played havoc with the British prejudices and false idols, he offered something positive too as an "artist-philosopher". "Though my trade is that of a playwright, my vocation is that of a prophet",⁸⁴ he used to say. As a dramatist of the future, he preached his gospel of the Creative Evolution in terms of which the universe is God in the act of evolving Himself, using an instrument till it serves His purpose and scrapping it

when it loses its utility or can be superseded by a better one. The idea finds its best expression in *Shewing up of Blanco Posnet*. "You bet He didnt make us for nothing ; and He wouldnt have made us at all if He could have done His work without us. By Gum, that must be what we're for ! He'd never have made us to be rotten drunken blackguards like me, and good-for-nothing rips like Feemy. He made me because He had a job for me. He let me run loose till the job was ready ; and then I had to come along and do it, hanging or no hanging". Shaw identifies God with the Life Force which underlies finer and ever finer creation, as Don Juan puts it : "I tell you that as long as I can conceive something better than myself I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the Law of my life. That is the working within me of Life's incessant aspiration to higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness and clearer self-understanding". (*Man and Superman*, Act III). This actuates "the philosophic man ; who seeks in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world, in invention to discover the means of fulfilling that will and in action to do that will by the so-discovered means." (*Man and Superman*, Act III).

It was Shaw's moral and intellectual passion, as indicated in his gospel of the Life Force which made him fulminate against the shams and lies upon which the respectability of the British middle classes was founded. This made him discover the way of salvation and preach it to the world till he handed the spiritual torch of life on to the future generations. To elucidate his startlingly new ideas Shaw supplemented the inner argumentation of his plays by an external comment in the elaborate prefaces which, in themselves, form a complete sociological literature on contemporary society. From a comprehensive study of Shaw the conviction grows that in spite of his preoccupations with preaching and propaganda and in spite of the fact that the want of dramatic aloofness made many of his characters the dummies of a ventriloquist, Shaw was essentially a theatre-wise artist, who "was at home only in the realm of" his "imagination", and at his "ease only with the mighty dead". (*Prefaces*, p. 680).

Shaw was a dramatist on whom the influences of master minds were at work. "I am a crow who have followed many ploughs", (*Prefaces*, p. 753) he confessed. Shaw, however, transformed these influences so completely that no one could find them in their original states. The idea has been beautifully expressed by Frank Harris : "His thinking was a broth, stewed by an Irishman, of the most varied schools of thought, chiefly from Schopenhauer, Strindberg, Butler, Bergson, Morris, and Nietzsche, Marx, Tolstoy, Ibsen and Wagner."³⁵

With his mind so enriched, Shaw could say with placid self-confidence,

"I shall be a panjandrum of literature for the next three hundred years"⁸⁶ and it is needless to mention here that he secured a place in the Pantheon for his services to the British theatre. It was he who effected the full flowering of the English Dramatic Renaissance in the Eighteen-Nineties. The British theatre as he found it was nothing but dross ; the Midas touch of his dramatic genius transmuted it by linking it with life, religion, philosophy and literature. He edified the theatre, widened the scope of the drama, and intellectualized the audience by insisting on a "pit of philosophers" in place of a crowd of pleasure seekers, keen on meretricious entertainments. Thus Shaw marked the culmination of the dramatic and intellectual movement which Ibsen had set afoot in the continent. It was he who popularized Ibsen in England by placing him above Shakespeare. Ibsen was "the God of his early idolatry"⁸⁷ and influenced his dramatic career profoundly.

Shaw used to assert, "I owe nothing to Ibsen", though he was "a perfect Ibsenite in drama." It is after the inauguration of the Malvern Festival in 1932, however, that Shaw's blanket confession on the question Ibsen's influence on himself came. Miss Blanche Patch records a conversation :

And "Nonsense !", he exclaimed when they wanted to set up a Shaw Memorial Theatre at Malvern. "Even among the playwrights I was not the only pebble on the beach. I am only one of Ibsen's Ghosts."⁸⁹

"I am only one of Ibsen's Ghosts"—this open avowal by Shaw on the question of his indebtedness to Ibsen, his "dramatic deity"⁴⁰, explains why his dramatic works are replete with Ibsenian ideas, beliefs and situations. *Widowers' Houses* betrays the influence of *Pillars of Society*. *Philanderer* "turns Ibsen out."⁴¹ *Mrs Warren's Profession* shows preeminently the influence of *Ghosts* and *A Doll's House*. *Candida* is a debated drama of *A Doll's House* type, offering striking similarities with *The Lady from the Sea*, *Love's Comedy*, *Peer Gynt* and *Brand* in ideas and situations. The influence of *Peer Gynt* is discernible in *Caesar and Cleopatra* and *John Bull's Other Island*. *Man and Superman* is reminiscent of *Emperor and Galilean*, *Peer Gynt*, *Love's Comedy* and *When We Dead Awaken*. Ibsen is directly mentioned in *Misalliance*, *Fanny's First Play*, and *Back to Methuselah*. *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isle* bears the impress of *Peer Gynt*. *Cymbeline Refinished* has been written by Shaw in the Ibsenian spirit.

Shaw's adoption of the Ibsenian technique accounts for his use of Ibsen's technical innovations, his use of the retrospective technique in *Mrs Warren's Profession*, his use of Ibsen's sit-down technique in the majority of his plays, his use of the Ibsenian method of

elaborate stage directions in fixing up the atmosphere and the tone of the play, and his use of Ibsen's discussion method in his own characteristic way. It shows, further, that Shaw has learnt from Ibsen how to fuse comedy and tragedy into a composite whole, to adjust his plays to the conditions of the picture-frame stage and to relieve intellectual stress by means of scenic and picturesque effects.

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BROWNINGIANA

(*Notes on some Browning Poems*)

AMALENDU BOSE

My Last Duchess

Recently, a Delhi scholar asked me the meaning of "I gave commands", (1.45) : his question is, "commands" to whom ?—to the Duchess or to assassins ?

This is how I have always understood the poem.

The Duke is a representative, almost a symbol, of a certain aspect of the Italian Renaissance, the aspect that has been associated with the Florentine Borgias and Machiavelli's *Il Prince*. (Let us remember that Machiavelli's Model Ruler was based on Alessandro Borgia. Let us also remember that dissertations on the personality of the Model Ruler was not confined to Italy ; we have examples in England—following the necessity for the Model Benevolent Despot during the Tudor period—in Roger Ascham's and Sir Thomas Elyot's books, although the English models do not share the personal morality or the reverse of it of the Borgias). In the Italian Renaissance temper, qualities that may strike readers of soft and psychologically unstable sensibilities as mutually incompatible, coexisted easily. Thus, great aesthetic and intellectual abilities, on the one hand, and utterly ruthless personal conduct, on the other, could be seamlessly present in the same personality. Consider the personality of the Duke of the poem from this point of view ; aristocratically suave and urbane to the tip of his fingers ; a master of diplomatic speech (innuendo, under-statement, double implications) as well as of language charged with poetry :

"The depth and passion of its earnest glance"

"the faint/Half-flush that dies along her throat"

"The dropping of the daylight in the West"

a man whose controlled anger and caste-pride are cloaked in a tone of shifting nuances.

It is this complex of opposite qualities that Browning brings out in the character of the Duke. To state it briefly, the man is a lover of art while the husband is cruel.

In the context of such a character, does it seem plausible that the commands would be addressed to the Duchess, as though the husband had

said, "Now, my lady the Duchess, I command you not to smile", and the lady ceased to smile ? Besides, the word is *commands*, not the singular number. I suggest that the crux of the matter is to be found in the second clause of the sentence in the poem :

This grew ; I gave commands ;

Then *all smiles stopped together.*

There she stands *As if alive.* (italics mine)

The woman's natural habit (or, one doesn't know, it might as well be a growing coquetry, although 'habit' fits in better with her personality) *grew*. Her husband, the Duke, hated her habit. Why ? Because this woman, in her native and constant geniality, failed to realise which object or experience properly merited her duchessly smile and which did not. She, a woman lacking in aristocratic discrimination, smiled when her husband gave her a brooch or a locket ("My favour at her breast") and smiled with equal geniality when some officious fool broke a twig of cherry-blossoms for her. This was intolerable to the Duke. Here was a woman, a duchess, who couldn't discriminate between thing and thing, an inability that showed up her lack of a sense of values that was essential to a person of her station in life. The husband could have remonstrated. Many other husbands would probably have done so, but, for this husband-Duke, the inheritor of a nine-hundred year old name, remonstrance was incompatible with his sense of dignity :

Who'd *stoop* to blame

This sort of trifling ? (italics mine)

E'en then would be some *stooping* ;

and I choose Never to *stoop.* (italics mine)

No, he couldn't *stoop*. (Let us also note the absolutely authoritarian phrase, "I *choose* never to stoop.") Meanwhile, *This grew*, there was no abatement to her habit of smiling. Therefore the only recourse open to the Duke was to *stop* her smiles. "Then all smiles stopped together." This total cessation of smiles would be possible only when the smiler was put irrevocably beyond the possibility of any smile, i. e., when the duchess was killed by one of the numerous assassination techniques of the sixteenth century by a hired assassin or by a group of assassins. (Burckhart's *Civilisation of the Renaissance of Italy*, p. 30, mentions the cruelty of the House of Este, and John D. Rea in a Note on this poem, *Studies in Philology*, 1932, pp. 120-22, convincingly traces the source of this poem to the personal history of Vespasiano Gonzaga, Duke of Sabbioneta, who had his first wife Diana murdered because of her liveliness.) The commands issued by Browning's Duke were the commands issued to the hired assassins. That she was killed, that on the occasion of this monologue, the woman

is dead, is diabolically suggested in the contrast of the two sentences: "Then all smiles stopped together" and "There she stands as if alive." It is not possible for the reader to fail to notice the malevolent implications of the sequential relationship between the stopping of smiles and the woman's being no longer alive now.

At this point, it is necessary to refer to a statement of Browning himself on the matter. Hiram Corson, an American professor, asked the poet the meaning of the lines we are considering. The poet said: "the commands were that she should be put to death,...or he might have had her shut up in a convent." I find the second alternative quite unacceptable. First, the woman's confinement in a convent would not justify the expression "all smiles stopped together"; she would no longer find any opportunity to smile at officious fools but the confinement could not clamp down on her a total cessation of smiles. Second, this interpretation blunts the edge of the innuendo in the juxtaposed sentences,

"All smiles stopped together" and "There she stands as if alive."

In the journalistic phraseology of today, the Duchess was liquidated and not sent to a concentration camp.

Pippa Passes

(A) No Browning scholar hitherto has indicated any source for any part of *Pippa Passes*. W. C. DeVane, *A Browning Handbook*, p. 87, makes the categorical statement that "Properly speaking there are no sources for *Pippa Passes* beyond the observation and imagination of Robert Browning." Without doubt, the topography of the poem-drama is that of Asolo and its pervasive spirit is that of the lambent chiaroscuro characteristic of Italy although, at times, a typically English suggestion is pushed in, as for example when Pippa's song in Part II beginning "Give her but a least excuse to love me!" mentions "Kate the Queen", giving a homely English stamp to the royal name of Queen Caterina Cornaro, ex-queen of Cyprus, who had lived in Asolo for some years.

To the best of my knowledge, no one seems to have noticed the high relevance of a Swinburne letter in regard to the question of sources of *Pippa Passes*. This is what Swinburne wrote to Lord Morley on 13 February, 1876:

If Browning did not consciously steal, and unconsciously and unconscionably spoil in the stealing, the episode of Jules the sculptor's marriage in "Pippa Passes" from the "Histoire de MMe. de la Pommeraye et du Marquis des Arcis" in *Jacques le Fataliste*, then all incredible coincidences must henceforth be held credible. The minute I saw the gist of Diderot's story I recognised the

admirable original of a decidedly unadmirable copy. As the work of a slighted woman's revenge, the conception seems to me most terribly and almost grandly natural; as the device of a male crew of jealous rival artists, absurdly false and repulsive by reason of its absurdity.

(*Letters of A. C. Swinburne*, ed. T. J. Wise and Edmund Gosse, I, 272)

Though Browning was very well read in French, curiously, there is no evidence to suggest that he had any special fancy for Diderot. The Encyclopaedists made no dent on his mind and art. The name of Diderot does not figure in Griffin and Mainchin's careful biography nor in Mrs Orr's *Life and Letters of Robert Browning*; the name does not occur in the *Letters* edited by T. L. Hood or the letters to Isabella Blagden edited by Edward C. McAleer. The name is mentioned once in the *Browning Love Letters*, i, 114 where the mention is meant to be, though in effect it is not, witty with a slant at Diderot's philosophy; this mention, dated June-July, 1845, is close to *Pippa Passes*, composed in 1840 and published the next year.

Swinburne overstates the coincidence. The fable of some persons conspiring to cheat a man in a marriage is an old one and an English author need not go further than Ben Jonson in search of such a fable. What is significant in the use of such a fable is the particular slant that has been given to it. In Browning's story of Jules and Phene, the three elements that are characteristically his own are: (i) the malice, irresponsibility and cruelty that prompt the students of art to conspire against the struggling Jules; (ii) the conclusive reversal of the dramatic situation that is wrought unconsciously by the unconcerned personality of Pippa, and (iii) the beautiful vision of escape by the two lovers to "some unsuspected isle in far-off seas", so representative of the *zeitgeist* throughout the Victorian period and so remote from Diderot's way of thinking.

Swinburne noticed (i) but failed to realise its significance.

My Star

First published in the *Men and Women* volume in 1855, this lyric was afterwards transferred to the *Dramatic Lyrics* volume. The date of composition is not known but W. C. DeVane (*Handbook*, p. 202) suggests the days in Italy after the poet's marriage.

I suggest an earlier date, earlier than the poet's marriage.

That star-imagery are frequent in Browning's poetry and deeply significant has been noticed by most sensitive readers of Browning, and we also

have Wellard Smith's laborious treatise on the subject. But 'star' as an image-symbol of subjective significance grows apace from the time of the poet's courtship and the lines in this poem

My star that dartles the red and the blue !

Then it stops like a bird ; like a flower, hangs furled :

They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.

may be chronologically linked with the following lines from a letter written to Elizabeth Barrett on July 18, 1845 :

.. as I see by the ~~law~~ of my own star, my own particular star, the star I was born under, the star *Wormwood* ... on the opposite sides of the heavens from the constellations of the Lyre and the Crown.

(*Browning Love Letters*, I, 130)

Love in a Life

First published in the *Men and Women* volume, 1855. This poem too, DeVane thinks, is a product of Browning's married life in Italy. I suggest an earlier date, April 1846, on the following evidence. A sentence from a letter to Elizabeth, dated April 6, 1846, goes thus :

In this House of Life ... where I go, you go ... where I ascend you run before ... when I descend it is after you.

(*Browning Love Letters*, II, 37)

In the poem, this idea is repeated :

Escape me ?

Never—

Beloved !

While I am I, and you are you,

So long as the world contains us both,

Me the loving and you the loth,

While the one eludes, must the other pursue.

The companion-piece, *Love in a Life*, repeats the idea of the sentence in the letter :

Room after room,

I hunt the house through

We inhabit together.

The two poems and the letter, built on the same idea and similar language, are chronologically linked.

Incidentally, the phrase "house of life" anticipates the title of D.G. Rossetti's sonnet-sequence.

The Mellon-Seller

First published in *Dramatic Idyls*, 1879. No source has been found

or conjectured for this poem. I find the source in the following letter of the poet to Elizabeth Barrett, post-mark August 6, 1846 :

How strange—and a few weeks ago I read, in the same paper [*The Times*] a letter from Constantinople—wherein the writer had mentioned that he had seen (I think, that morning) Pacha somebody, whose malpractices had just drawn on him the Sultan's vengeance, and who had been left with barely his life,—having lost his immense treasures, palaces and garden etc. along with his dignity,—the writer saw this old man selling slices of melon on a bridge in the city ; and on stopping in wonderment to praise such constancy, the Turk asked him with at least equal astonishment, whether it was not fitter to praise Allah who had leant him such wealth for forty years, than to repine that he had judged right to recall it now ?

(*Browning Love Letters*, II, 405)

That it was Browning's habit to store up a subject for a long time is attested by William Rossetti :

He seldom or never, unless in quite brief poems, feels the inspiring impulse and sets the thing down into words at the same time—often stores up a subject long before he writes it.

(*Rossetti Papers*, 302)

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WIT AND SHAKESPEARE

P. K. MITRA

Like all anecdotes those about Shakespeare's witticism may or may not be founded on fact, but there can be little doubt about the high merit of the wit which his works amply demonstrate. If Fuller's account is any guide, many were the wit-battles between him and Ben Jonson in which Shakespeare would invariably outwit his opponent as nimbly as the English galley that had defeated the Spanish Armada. And yet critical attention paid to his wit in relation to the plays he wrote has been comparatively inadequate. When other aspects of his dramatic language have been explored with much enthusiasm, this insufficiency seems somewhat curious.

Looking back, one would remember Dryden not so much for his remarks about Shakespeare's wit in particular—for indeed he has said little about it—as for his very illuminating observations on witticism in general, for which, of course, his many Prefaces are an excellent repository. Even the very word 'witticism', interestingly, was coined by him. Dr Johnson's 'fatal Cleopatra' earned a notoriety that did not quite die with Coleridge's defence of Shakespeare's pun in his many lectures. Why the pun should be repugnant to him and not appear as a delectable dramatic means is something of a puzzle. An easy answer would be ascribing it to his attitude to language—an attitude typical of the Augustans, almost religiously disciplined—were we not familiar with other critics like Walter Whiter,¹ and Kellett (Suggestions 1923) in the present century, who have endorsed this view of Johnson on Shakespeare without, however, fully sharing his linguistic predilections.² It was for Coleridge, who comes in handy for any critical assessment of Shakespeare, to give his pun its due importance and to show that 'the fatal Cleopatra' of Johnson far from being fatal was for Shakespeare truly a lucky angel. But the attempt of Coleridge was half-hearted though no doubt it has considerably influenced some of the modern critics of Shakespeare. Among those of the twentieth century who have specially acclaimed Shakespeare's wordplay are Cleanth Brooks³, F. P. Wilson,⁴ William Empson⁵, Kenneth Muir⁶ and M. M. Mahood.⁷ But since the pun is not the sole constituent of wit, its other components should not also pass unnoticed. Concerning his

puns, I would like in this study to show how Shakespeare puts them—specially the less difficult ones—to finer and more significant uses in his maturer plays, his tragedies in particular, as he develops as an artist, and how he has consciously endeavoured to make them a part of his poetic device as well as linguistic forte. Then I propose to consider a few other types of wit used by him, how they are unique and in what ways they have enriched his art.

A satisfying definition of wit is not easy, although one knows almost for certain what passes for wit. 'Pun, half pun, assonance, epigram (in the modern sense) and distorted quotations are all witty.' So are sharp antithesis, quick repartees, short parodies and, of course, conceits. Since this paper is to treat Shakespeare's verbal wit, I find Matteo Pellegrini of Bologna (1650) on the whole acceptable when he defines wit as 'that part of the soul which in a certain way practises, aims, and seeks to find and create the beautiful and the efficacious,'⁸ but he is certainly more than merely good when he considers the work of wit to be the 'conceits' and 'subtleties,'⁹ I should without doubt reject Emmanuele Tessaro as soon as he in his enthusiasm begins to descant upon "symbolic" and "figurative" conceits (statues, hieroglyphs, emblems, etc.) as forming wit.¹⁰ I would regard neither the trick with which Beatrice and Benedick are brought close to each other nor Hamlet's 'mouse-trap' device as constituting wit. For my purpose wit is something verbal affording intellectual satisfaction by the unexpected association of apparently unconnected ideas, some point of similarity, being realized with a shock of surprise. F. L. Lucas's definition—'a clever saying with a playful tinge'—is even more helpful, since more comprehensive. Wit, as he further explains in his *Literature and Psychology*, Ch. IX, is a kind of 'extempore artistry, employing many devices—epigrammatic brevity, symbolism, allusiveness, ambiguity, comparison ; and all this with a nuance of comedy' The playful tinge in a Shakespearean tragedy may infuse a new tone, and unless the situation in the play were different it could imaginatively serve as a link between his tragedy and comedy. Lamb has said somewhere that to appreciate wit we must take into consideration the totality of time and place. In tragedy wit does seldom cause any laughter, but it can be highly dramatic—bringing into light an unknown trait of a character, deepening an atmosphere and heightening a tense moment or making a point of dramatic irony. In Shakespeare's comedies, however, wit is always titillating, more often than not a weapon in amorous encounter. Bergson and Freud are of little help in explaining Shakespeare's wit, but Freud's classification of wit into (a) Harmless and (b) Tendentious kinds¹¹ is

significant. The first is applicable specially to those Elizabethan comedies classed as 'sweet' and the second to those termed 'bitter.' Wit depending on a mere combination of words may at times be dramatically effective indeed, but where it is based on a combination of ideas its impact is dramatically even more satisfactory. At this stage Coleridge's distinction between wit and fancy may be relevant. "When the whole pleasure received is derived from surprise at an unexpected turn of expression, then I call it wit ; but when the pleasure is produced not only by surprise, but also by an image which remains with us and gratifies for its own sake, then I call it fancy".¹² In Shakespeare there is happy blend of fancy and wit—a quality very important in the sense that it has made his wit not a thing apart from his poetic drama, but a component of it. In close proximity of the pun is conceit remarkable for its various dramatic uses in Shakespeare. Also remarkable is the way in which the longer conceits of the early plays have been changed by him later into pithy conceited statements of considerable dramatic import. A conceit, Elizabethan or metaphysical, is a subtly framed image, based simultaneously on a number of 'predicaments' or common places in logic, having a particular character formally distinguishable, allied to certain types of function and stylistically very striking. The formal defining element in any conceit, as Rosemond Tuve points out, is the 'use of *multiple logical bases* : upon all of which the comparison obtains'.¹³ Ambiguity, wit's well-head, has been put to use by Shakespeare in a number of ways. Shakespeare's wit is easily distinguished from his contemporaries' since his is more often than not a product of the combination of a resemblance of ideas and a resemblance of words—the kind Cowley would call 'Mixed Wit'. Also, occasionally wit emanates from a nice opposition of ideas as in euphuism which Shakespeare never quite forsakes or from such ingenious expression as 'heart of fire', 'breast of snow' *et cetera*. To an Elizabethan or a metaphysical poet turning a lyrical hyperbole into a fine piece of witticism was never very exacting ; and as for Shakespeare, he did it ever so felicitously.

It is difficult to ascertain how much of this intellectual suppleness Shakespeare owed to his reading of Plautus and Terence, and how much to other writers, but it is certain that the measure of his debt to them is very limited. Unquestionably his genius here, as in sundry other respects, is more a product of the popular national spirit behind him than anything else. John Lyly, of course, is a profound influence ; the witty parodying of his euthuistic style in *Henry IV* in fact shows the fascination it exercised on him. In the core of his most courtly wit is often Lyly, but the simpler witticisms of the rustics are in line

with the earlier native tradition. If the early plays of Shakespeare abound in simple puns, one likely reason for this could be Shakespeare's intention to feed a new found craze for wit-battles among the Elizabethans, supposedly a body of discerning people who were keenly appreciative of their dramatic role. Shakespeare knew the works of George Puttenham in which is found a story, supporting the pun's efficacy, of how one Polemon desirous of kingly favour was advised by a courtier Philino through a pun. Gifted as he was with a beautiful daughter he should not encounter any difficulty in getting his wish fulfilled. Philino told :

Your best way to worke, and mark my words well,

Not money ; nor many ;

Nor any ; but any ;

Not weemen ; but weemen bear the bell.

Puttenham's own analysis of the puns used by Philino may be quoted. "Subtlety lay in the accent and Ortographie of the two words any and weemen, for any being devided sounds a nie or neere person to the king, and weemen being devided sounds wee—men and weemen and so by this mean Philino served all turns and shifted himself from blame."¹⁴ Polemon profited by his advice. The pun on 'women' is quite frequent in Gascoigne. Berowne in *Love's Labour's Lost* uses it dramatically and with zest in his argument against celibacy and in support of love, the role of which, unless it is too ethereal, is to perpetuate human race.

For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love,

Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men,

Or for men's sake the authors of these women ;

Or women's sake, by whom we men are men,

Let us lose our oaths to find ourselves. (L.L L.IV, iii)

Love's Labour's Lost, with many Lylian accents, partly for thematic exigency and partly for displaying wit for its own sake, has in it a series of finely devised comic situations in which a group of young ladies and a group of young gallants are seen engaged in lively wit-combats. The play shows the lines along which Shakespeare develops, specially in relation to his comedies. Berowne's persuasive 'Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile' changes into Othello's 'Put out the light, and then put out the light' in a very tense moment. This is to cite only one instance. If the early plays of Shakespeare are the works of a conscious apprentice essaying perfection, the puns there are also like a tuning-exercise, later modulated into excellent finesse and applied with nice and instinctive discrimination to his great dramas.

It is evident from his later plays on graver subjects that the complicated feelings in a particular situation may be with facility expressed through a pun, if he uses one, with multiple shades of meaning. In a case like this the preponderance of a pun's secondary meaning is in due proportion to the play's controlling idea. Where a pun of this nature occurs, it almost invariably comes to the author in a process not unlike that in which a poetic image forms in him. He hits it off unconsciously or half consciously. But the process is the end-product of his earlier efforts to attain this stage in which the pun not only emphasizes the dominant idea of a play, but also becomes an exact equivalent of the complex emotional tension of a dramatic character. The deliberate wit of his early plays in the form of word-play is now knit into his imagery. To give a comparatively simple example, in *The Comedy of Errors* the word 'cheer' is repeatedly used by Antipholus of Ephesus to welcome Balthazar.

Ant E. You are sad, Signior Balthazar : pray God, our cheer
May answer my good will and your good welcome here.

Bal. I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your welcome dear.

Ant E. O, Signior Balthazar, either at flesh or fish,
A table full of welcome makes scarce one dainty dish.

Bal. Good meat, sir, is common that every churl affords.

Ant E. And welcome more common ; for that's nothing but words.

Bal. Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast.

Ant E. Ay, to a niggardly host and more sparing guest.
But though my cates be mean, take them in good part ;
Better cheer may you have, but not with better heart. (III ; i)

Apart from its obvious meaning 'food', the word 'cheer' by its very sound suggests 'chair'—a seat which seems in order when we notice that it is followed by 'welcome'. Besides, in the context of the refusal to admit them into Ant. E's own house, which they presently encounter, 'welcome' turns out to be a fine piece of comic irony ; and more, it comes up to Ant. E's belief "...welcome more common : for that's nothing but words." "Cheer" also indicates the speaker's joyous disposition. Now for an example in *Macbeth* :

... Seyton I—I am sick at heart ;

When I behold—Seyton, I say I—This push

Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now... (V, iii).

where the connexion between *cheer* and *dis-seat* is clear enough ; the similarity in pronunciation between the two words *cheer* and *chair* cannot be missed, and *dis-seat* naturally follows *chair*. But the initial *cheer* has a link with *sick at heart*. The pun here well expresses

Macbeth's desperate condition. The comic irony in the dialogue between Ant. E and Balthazar already quoted from the *Errors* shows up as grimly ironical in a different situation in *Macbeth* Act III, scene 4 where Lady Macbeth also seems to ascribe more value to 'welcome' than to the feast proper in entertaining the guests.

My royal Lord

You do not give the cheer : the feast is sold,
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome :

Here *cheer* meaning 'food' is followed by *feast* which in turn asks for *welcome* to the guests. 'Welcome' has an effective undertone of requesting the guests to take their seats, which presumably they are occupying. The suggestion of 'chair' in *cheer* has an ironical implication for Macbeth, for presently he discovers that in his banquet hall, where welcome should attend all, he himself has become an unwelcome stranger. The sight of Banquo's ghost occupying his chair unnerves him totally. This leads to disorder, the guests depart and the *welcome* of Lady Macbeth proves Ant. E's 'nothing but words'.

To take another example from *The Comedy of Errors*, in which the word 'nothing' is specially relevant to its comic situation :

Dro. S. ...Well, sir, I thank you.

Ant. S. Thank me, sir ! for what ?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.

Ant. S. I'll make you amends next, to give you nothing for something. (II, ii.)

There is hardly any pun here, but the wit is in the chiastic order of something and nothing, much in the fashion of Berowne's 'They have pitched a toil, I am toiling in a pitch'. Again, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* Launce is in a clownish manner witty with 'nothing'.

Pro. Who then ? his spirit ?

Val. Neither

Pro. What then ?

Val. Nothing

Launce. Can nothing speak ? Master, shall I strike ?

Pro. Who wouldst thou strike ?

Launce. Nothing

Pro. Villain, forbear.

Launce. Why, sir, I'll strike nothing : I pray you. (III, i)

As against this, the remark of Lear's Food about his master stands out significantly : ...'now art thou an O without a figure, I am better than

thou art now, I am a Fool, thou art nothing'. This describes the miserable state in which Lear finds himself for credulously accepting his two daughters' false protestations, compounded of mere words and nothing more. Viewed against the total meaning of King Lear, the word 'nothing' when played on takes on a new significance, as will be evident from the following exchange between Lear and Cordelia :

Lear. What can you say to draw

A third more opulent than your sisters ? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing !

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again. (I, i.)

It may be pointed out here that in Shakespeare if a certain word is frequently repeated with emphasis, one may well suspect that the repetition is purposeful. The meaning of the word most likely is part of the meaning of the play in which it occurs. One such word in *Lear*, of course, is 'nothing', echoing throughout the play, and much to blame for the tragic misunderstanding between the old king and Cordelia. Blinded by anger at her 'nothing', he does not see the word's true meaning, which in the situation is not really unflattering for Lear. She on her part may be impolitic, and is certainly niggardly of speech compared with her two sisters' loud protestations ; but her one word speaks volumes for her filial love and, at the same time, expresses her unhappiness. All she can say in reply to Lear's eager question is 'nothing', by which she means to emphasize at once that it is not a good or impressive word but only good actions that can gain 'results', that the asseverations of her sisters are absolutely hollow, that she is unwilling to compete with them in expressing filial love in words, since she knows that they are 'no things', and her love compared with theirs is 'More ponderous' than her 'tongue'. Judging Goneril and Regan from Cordelia's point of view, which seems acceptable, there is little inconsistency in their behaviours towards their father. Since they are not like good Cordelia, they think it useless to do homage to one who after abdication is no more than 'no nothing'. That Lear is still to complete his education, unfortunately, through tragic experience is betrayed by his simple confidence that he can remain a king even after depriving himself of his kingship. Even when he proposes to live with only 'The name and all th' addition to a king,' he sets him an ideal of renunciation that is marked with contradictions, though in reality he is turned into 'nothing' soon after. And shocked beyond measure, he begins fretting about the world. By contrast Richard II longs for a

complete renunciation. He must 'nothing be', and give up 'The pride of kingly sway' from out his heart, and forswear 'All pomp and majesty.' Whereas Richard's prayer is, "Make me, that nothing have, with nothing griev'd," Lear finds himself in conflict with Goneril and Regan because of his resolve not to part with his hundred knights, who are really his status symbol. Lear's experiment proves tragic; for it cannot be that one should give up one's power and authority and still hope to command usual regard in society. Lear perceives his folly when divesting himself of his kingship he finds that he is in a state of nonbeing or 'nothingness', so that the question he asks The Fool—'Who is it that can tell me who I am? — is simply rhetorical. He indeed knows what The Fool's unflattering reply should be, for that is his own answer, too... 'an O without a figure . thou art nothing.' He is now Lear's shadow, a mere cipher. We may recall here how T. S. Eliot echoes this 'nothing' of *King Lear* in *The Waste Land*, the following extract from which lends further support to my contention. This does not, however, mean overlooking possible echoes from other plays of Shakespeare.

'What is that noise?'

The wind under the door.

'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'

Nothing again nothing.

'Do

'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember

Nothing?

I remember

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?

But

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag

Here also 'O' is emblematic of hollowness, and is associated with the previous 'nothing' which links up with 'Those are pearls that were his eyes' in a level of the unconscious, or in a state approaching it. The tagging of the 'Shakespeherian Rag' O O O O repeating Lear's helpless groans as a man reduced to 'nothing' is intended not only to intensify but also to dramatize the mood and the atmosphere in the lady's room.

In Shakespeare a visual experience often suggests the pun. One well appreciates Rosalind's 'Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown More than your enemies,' after the wrestling scene, or in *Richard III* the Duke of Gloucester's 'I'll make a corse of him that disobeys I,' a

threat to force the pall-bearers should they refuse to set down the corse, or Hamlet's, seeing his father's apparition 'I'll make a ghost of him that lets me.' Compared with these is highly interesting the punning link between the phrase 'breach in nature' with which Macbeth vivifies the mortal wounds in the person of Duncan and the phrase 'Unmannerly breech'd with gore,' used by him to describe the supposed murderers' daggers. There is little evidence to suggest that Shakespeare made here any conscious efforts to play upon the word 'breach.' In a situation such as this the pun that a character may use comes to him as a kind of automatic release of emotion, working as if it were a safety-valve. Lady Macbeth's pun in her resolve :

If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withel,
For it must seem their guilt (II, ii.)

is somewhat different in the sense that it is a product of what she has already mentally visualized, preparing herself at the same time with great efforts to stand the bloody spectacle. The words 'gild' and 'guilt,' having similar sounds, are deeply expressive of the extremely nervous tension of Lady Macbeth. Also, they make her statement so impressive as to make it almost memorable. More than the taunt at her husband's 'manhood' which it indicates, implicit in it is her attitude to the crime. She cannot see much beyond the present, for to her 'guilt is something like gilt' easily removed or, if needed, painted on. In the end, of course, she discovers that after all her sin is too fast and indelible. Interestingly, as Kenneth Muir rightly points out,¹⁵ the image of gilding looks forward to Macbeth's description of Duncan's dead body—

His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood. (II, iii)

The instances of the puns cited till now are not intended to define some independent pattern of development in Shakespeare's use of this language device. For whatever pattern of this is discerned in the final analysis is knit into the thought-pattern which his work as a whole reveals. The two are dependent on each other, no matter if in variable keys, and not mutually exclusive. What potency a pun should hold is determined by the nature of a particular dramatic exigency, and the dramatist may know of it with no conscious efforts at all. If a certain pun is seen performing nearly identical functions in two or more plays, or, for, that matter, there are frequent similarities between Shakespeare's early and late style, we should have little cause for surprise. One instance would do to make the point. A common enough punning word is 'die' which figures so prominently in both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*—the two tragedies distanced from each other by twelve or

thirteen years. But in their death scenes the pun is successively used to heighten the dramatic effect. Its normal meaning apart, the verb 'to die' till the seventeenth century would mean "to experience the consummation of the sexual act" and also "to dye" in the modern sense. One would recall how Donne has used this pun so successfully in *The Good-Morrow* and *The Canonization*. Romeo's dying speech contains the pun on 'die': 'O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.' (dies). Juliet too embraces death with the same pun in her lips :

Yea, noise ?—then I'll be brief—O happy
dagger I (*Snatching Romeo's dagger.*)

This is thy sheath ; (*Stabs herself.*) there rest

● and let me *die*. (Falls on Romeo's body and dies.) (V, iii)

Once we perceive the secondary meaning of 'die' we can easily read the sexual undertones of the words 'dagger,' 'sheath,' and 'rest.' Desire frustrated in an unlovely situation can seek fulfilment only in figures such as these.

What Troilus declares in a different context may as well be applied to the lovers in both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

This is the
monstrosity in love Lady, that the will is infinite and
the execution confin'd; that the desire is boundless, and the
act a slave to limit. (Troilus III, ii),

Cleopatra's 'immortal longings' may be regarded as a belated but honest confession of her boundless desire, which, since Antony is dead, may reach satiety only through death. Her make-believe jealousy of Iras, dead a short while ago, serves to reflect the momentary glimpse of her life with Antony that is no more but which she would feign capture before Iras can reach Antony. This is not to suggest that Shakespeare was a Freudian before Freud, nor have we lost anything because Shakespeare had not heard of the Leibestod theme. What is very true about him is that his studies of human behaviour are more intense and varied than any school of psychologists is likely to explore. In *Antony and Cleopatra* death appears as a lover, a bridegroom, or a bride—but 'die' retains the same punning meaning. Part estimate of Cleopatra's character is given by Enobarbus through this pun.

Under a compelling occasion let women die: it were pity to cast them away for nothing, though between them and a great cause, they should be esteemed nothing. Cleopatra catching but the least noise of this dies instantly. I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment: I do think there is mettle in

death, which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such celerity in dying. (I, ii)

Death is pictured as a lover by Cleopatra when Iras falls and dies :

If thou and nature can so gently part,
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts, and is desir'd. (V, ii)

Antony's

... I will be

A bridegroom in my death, and run into 't

As to a lover's bed.

(IV, xii)

should appear near enough Cleopatra's wordplay on 'die' in the following lines expressing her grimly humorous desire which further deepens the tragic emotion inherent in the situation.

O I come, come, come ;

(They heave Antony aloft to Cleopatra.)

And welcome, welcome I Die when thou hast liv'd,

Quicken with kissing.

(IV, xiii)

She would wish Antony to play the lover's part quickly and *die* for the last time before he is dead. I suspect a pun in 'Quicken'—whose two meanings are 'gain life or vitality' and 'cause to bequick,' both of which fit in with the sexual meaning of 'die' intended in the situation. Her 'Quicken' is not so unlike Romeo's 'quick' in 'thy drops are quick.' The characters stressing the secondary meanings in their speeches in a tense situation may appear frivolous at first sight, but a close look will show that the so-called frivolity is no more than part of the device to effect the intensity of the moment.

Now that I have illustrated a few of the peculiarities of Shakespeare's pun, I may as well enumerate its chief functions, specially in his tragedies. First, as in the case of a word or an image in poetry, a pun's role could not have been performed by anything else. Secondly, puns are a kind of illogical reinforcement of 'the logical sequence of thought' as in the lines of Lady Macbeth quoted a little while ago. Thirdly, puns effect some kind of mixed metaphors by linking together disparate images. Fourthly, a pun in Shakespeare presupposing multiple-mindedness leaves the audience or the reader with a complex of ideas, thus enhancing the total meaning of a play. Fifthly, and it follows from the first, as in all poetic plays, poetry explores the innermost reality of human experience, so do puns often, specially when they are unconscious ; reaching the distant deep of the human heart,

they bring to the surface even those emotions which are perceptible but inexpressible through ordinary language.

From the point of view of drama the functions of Shakespeare's conceits are nearly analogous to those of his puns. Speaking broadly, provided the images tend to be metaphorical, a conceit is based on comparison between two or more disparate images, each of which independently communicates an idea. A conceit seizes upon an idea for the purpose of comparison and then elaborates the same by playing upon it. Shakespeare's early works have in them various plays upon ideas suiting the occasions, many of which are prolonged in the way chevril gloves are stretched out, to argue, to persuade or for serving as decorative devices for their own sake. It is not until his later plays that the conceits become dramatically integral, that is to say, organic. Whereas the unconscious puns with multiple shades of meanings are a kind of co-product of the poetic process, conceits depending on comparison between two or more unlike things are almost invariably deliberate, the quality of wit they produce varying according to the degree of ingenuity with which they are formed. Under ingenuity I would also include the capacity to fashion a conceit in such a way as would suit the demands of a subject, and observe the necessary 'decorum.' As I have indicated, a conceit in Shakespeare's early plays is generally out of place, and used as a decorative convention. Let me take an example from *Love's Labour's Lost* which Professor Clemen has discussed so well¹⁶ by comparing it with another from *Twelfth Night*.

Boyet. Therefore change favours ; and, when they repair
Blow like sweet roses in the autumn air.

Princess. How blow ? how blow ? speak to be understood.

Boyet. Fair ladies mask'd are roses in their bud ;
Dismask'd, their damask sweet commixhere shown,
Are angels vailing clouds, or roses blown.

Princess. Avaunt, perplexity ! (L.L.L.V, ii)

Perplexity indeed ! Boyet explains himself in so complicated a manner that rather than making himself clear to the Princess, he makes the confusion worse. This is due to his studied enthusiasm for elaborating the conceit 'Blow like sweet roses,' in which process there is the unnecessary digression 'are angels vailing clouds.' Placed by its side the two lines from the Duke's conversation with Viola in *Twelfth Night* reveal something different.

For women are roses, where fair flower
Being once display'd, doth fall that very hour. (II, iv)

Here the image of rose is functional, in that it adequately expresses the Duke's thought about women. To state it in abstract terms would mean taking away much of its emphasis. Besides, there is not anything in this comparison that is superfluous. I have said that in the early plays a conceit is generally a decorative device, and I stress the word 'generally' for it is not always so. At times it may be highly functional, perhaps expressing a thought or revealing the nature of a character employing the conceit. In *Love's Labour's Lost* Berowne's observation on feminine psychology, as quoted below, seems apposite.

What ! I love, I sue, I seek a wife—

A woman, that is like a German Clock,

Still a-repairing, ever out of frame,

And never going aright, being a watch,

But being watch'd that it may still go right ! (*L.L.L.* III, i)

Berowne has elaborately given his estimate of a woman's nature through comparing it with the behaviour of a German clock. But this conceit from his soliloquy, though elaborate, is irreducible and, of course, irreplaceable by simple abstract terms. Furthermore, it is a testimony to Berowne's observant nature revealed in course of his self-examination. The force of the pun on 'watch' is noteworthy. For a more elaborate conceit on the clock image, we may turn to *Richard II*, where the similarity between Richard and a clock has been defined point by point.

For now hath time made me his numb'ring clock ;

My thoughts are minutes ; and with sighs they jar

Their watches on unto my eyes, the outward watch,

Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,

Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears. (*Rich. II.* V, v)

The conceit here, an image of grief-stricken and self-pitying Richard, is in keeping with his love for dramatizing his reflective nature, its most remarkable ingenuity being the comparison of his finger busy wiping tears with a clock dial. It shows once more how Shakespeare's fancy combined with intellect plays many variations.

It is common knowledge by now that in Shakespeare's comedies the measure of aggressiveness displayed in the lovers' wit-combat is really their emotional barometer—a popular dramatic contrivance, psychologically tenable, to indicate passion in its true colours. But remarkably, without being aggressive wit can perfectly show the depth of love, as also make a tender romantic situation tenderer still. The following exchange between Juliet and Romeo is for illustration :

Jul. At what O'clock to-morrow

Shall I send to thee ?

Rom. At the hour of nine.

Jul. I will not fail ; 'tis twenty years till then.

I have forgot why I did call thee back.

Rom. Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Jul. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,

Remembering how I love thy company. (R & J. II, ii)

The wit of it is in the hyperbole 'tis twenty years till then,' and in the putting of two ideas—forgetting and remembering—in reverse order to suit her clever, loving argument. To Juliet Romeo's absence, even for a brief while, is naturally unwelcome, a tediousness wittily expressed through the hyperbole we have just noted. A similar example is given below from the same play *Romeo and Juliet*.

Jul. I must hear from thee every day in the hour,

For in a minute there are many days ;

O, by this count I shall be much in years

Ere I again behold my Romeo ! (III, v)

If to Juliet a minute seems many days, to Hamlet in a very different situation two months may not appear more than two hours, as will be evident from the bitter sarcastic wit with which he reviles Ophelia in Act III, scene ii.

Ham. What should a man do but be merry ? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within's two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long ? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens ! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet ? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year ; etc.

In it is seen Hamlet's agonizing thought, and no laughter is intended. As for Juliet, she has been consistent in the use of this figure for the purpose of stressing her feeling about Romeo's absence. In a later play, *Othello*, no less dramatic is the conceit of Cassio with which he indicates his joy at the news of Desdemona's safe arrival at Cyprus.

Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,

The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands,

Traitors ensteep'd to enclog the guiltless keel,

As having sense of beauty, do omit

Their mortal natures, letting go safely by

The divine Desdemona. (*Othello*, II, i)

That the conceit here is organic in character is seen from the two distinct functions it performs. First, it reflects Cassio's sense of relief that no harm

from the storm has befallen Desdemona's beauty and, following this, his ecstatic joy. Secondly, there is 'more in it in praise of Desdemona's beauty, that could even tame Nature, and this is in consonance with Cassio's eulogy of hers moments ago as 'a maid that paragon's description and wild fame.' There is, however, little evidence to support Professor Clemen's contention that 'the rescue appeared to the hard-pressed seafarers in a miraculous light, and Cassio rivets this impression with an image.'¹⁷ In a 'similar vein Arviragus in one of Shakespeare's last plays *Cymbeline* uses a conceit which is both lyrical and witty, and which brings forward the reflective mind of the speaker and the impression he has already formed about Imogen in course of his previous meeting with her in disguise.

Nobly he yokes

A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh
Was what it was, for not being such a smile ;
The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
From so divine a temple, to commix
With winds that sailors rail at.

(*Cymb.* IV, ii)

The force of wit in this conceit is in its proper dramatic employment, in the suggestion of a rare combination of 'A smiling' and 'a sigh' in her. Looking back, in *King Lear* we come across a conceit depending on images but formed in similar manner, which too expresses the rich combination, this time, of 'patience' and 'sigh'.

.....patience and sorrow strove

Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once : her smiles and tears
Were like a better way : those happy smilets
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes : which parted thence
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,
Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved,
If all could so become it.

(IV, iii)

And further back still, not in a play but in a poem, *Venus and Adonis*, we find a similar process employed, though in an embryonic form.

O, how her eyes and tears lend and borrow
Her eyes seen in her tears, tears in her eye ;
Both crystals, where they viewed each other's sorrow

These instances of conceits are a further evidence of how in Shakespeare poetry combines with wit. At times Shakespeare's wit may be highly effective through an economy of words. Hamlet's bitterness

at his mother's marriage so soon after his father's death is tellingly expressed in a way characterized by brevity.

Thrift, thrift, Horatio

The Funeral baked meat did coldly furnish forth the marriage table.

(I, ii)

The quick fusion of the two ideas by Hamlet is indicative of his sharp intellect, as also of his deeply wounded feelings now mixed with extreme disgust. The linguistic process forming this searing, sarcastic piece of witticism resembles that forming the two witty lines of Richard II. Coveting John of Gaunt's property he wishes him dead, so that

"The lining of his coffers shall make coats

To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars."

Indeed Hamlet as wit is unrivalled among Shakespeare's heroes. Sharp, even devastatingly frank at times, his utterances may at unexpected moments turn out to be witty but not perhaps amusing just at once. Often with remarkable facility and nimbleness he splits a line or a word even, and uses a part of it to some purpose. Let me quote by way of illustration two lines of Hamlet. Their significance is better appreciated when they are associated with some previous lines, particularly with the one expressing his resolve before approaching his mother's chamber, that he will 'speak daggers to her, but use none.' He acts up to his thought, as indeed his words do pierce Gertrude. She implores her son :

O, speak to me no more !

These words like daggers enter in my ears. (III, iv)

And then, when much of his anger is emptied on her, she says to him 'O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain,' and Hamlet's immediate counsel to her is that she lead a cleaner life :

O, throw away the worse part of it,

And live the purer with the other half,.....as if, speaking

literally, a heart can be 'cleft' with words, and a part of it cast away at will.

I have made a brief mention of ambiguity present in unequal degrees in all forms of wit, which, however, is not the same thing as poetic ambiguity, although the processes in which the two are formed and their ends are not essentially at variance, since both aim at precision, that is to say, as Polonius might wish,

With assays of bias

By indirections find directions out.

In Shakespeare ambiguity may be profound as also emotional and not simply intellectual. Such dramatic ambiguities seem easier to understand than the ambiguities in poetry, specially studied by Empson

and Cleanth Brooks. In the Elizabethan comedy ambiguity is the language of disguise, though it is by no means unusual in tragedy ; the comedies of Shakespeare we immediately remember in this connexion are *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. Ambiguity also plays the pivotal role in *The Merchant of Venice*, where the simple language of the bond is rendered ambiguous by Portia, and successfully applied to bring about Shylock's discomfiture and thus prevent Antonio's doom.

It is also seen in *Macbeth*, where equivocation is a very potent cause of the hero's undoing. In each of these plays it is integral to the plot. Hamlet's madness is a disguise he 'craftily' wears in which the language he speaks—enigmatic to those for whom it is intended—is a natural way of speaking. It is dramatically relevant, though the wisdom of his pretended madness may or may not be doubted. His riddling speeches in that state serve to let off much of his pent up emotion. Cressida's conceit on the 'divided self' in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act III, scene ii, is perfectly in character, later proving an effective irony for Troilus. Viewed against the subsequent gay abandonment of hers in Diomedes's company, it leaves us with little doubt about the deliberateness of her ambiguity. The link is easily detected between what she says in the following lines :

I have a kind of self resides with you ;
 But an unkind self, that itself will leave,
 To be another's fool. I would be gone :
 Where is my wit ? I speak I know not what...(III, ii)

and her self-pity later :

Troilus, farewell I one eye yet looks on thee,
 But with my heart the other eye doth see.
 Ah I poor our sex ; this fault in us I find,
 The error of our eye directs our mind. (V, ii)

The four lines quoted from Cressida's speech in III, ii mean, according to some, that half of herself resides with Troilus even though she leaves him, and this half is unkind to her since it leaves her at all to be somebody else's fool. I would, however, give a different interpretation which is as follows : 'I have a kind of self which resides with you, Troilus, though I leave you. But I carry with me a self that will prove unkind to me since, having no control of mine over it, it will leave me to be another's fool.' She, it seems, is thinking ahead and the word 'itself' is just an emphatic pronoun of 'an unkind self.' I suspect there is a pun on 'fool.' Where indeed is her wit gone when she only too readily descends to be the 'fool' of Diomedes completely ? Mind is guided by the 'error of our eye.' On his part Troilus also soon realises that

between Cressida's protestation of love through words and her actual actions there is the lack of congruence. Once again words are 'nothing', as Troilus painfully discovers :

Words, words, mere words, no matter for the heart ;
 The effect doth operate another way. (Tearing the letter)
 Go, wind to wind, there turn and change to-gether.
 My love with words and errors still she feeds,
 But edifies another with her deeds. (V, iv)

A study of Shakespeare's wit yields interesting results when it is made specially in relation to *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry IV*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*. Wit in *Love's Labour's Lost* is used a good deal as an entertainment in itself, and the play's action, however thinly spread, is dependent on the series of wit-combats. In *Romeo and Juliet* wit seems to me sometimes out of place and sometimes very much the reverse. Romeo's wit is Hamlet's in embryo. Mercutio, though not Romeo's equal in this respect, must get killed, lest by his very exuberant nature amply revealed in his wit, he should move parallel with Romeo, if not outshine him, and pose a dramatic problem. Wit in *Henry IV* is mixed with Falstaff's humour, receiving its sustenance from the frequent comic situations, each of which affords him an opportunity for displaying his inventive genius. The peculiar reputation the two parts of *Henry IV* enjoy among Shakespeare's history plays is greatly owing to this. In *Much Ado*, it is used for its own sake, and also as an expression of character and an instrument for shaping the plot. In *Troilus and Cressida*, generally regarded as his most intellectual play, Cressida's flippancy in the Greek camp lights up the depth of Troilus's despair in an absolutely devastating way. In *Hamlet* it is used in almost every conceivable way. In point of wit, *Hamlet* is among Shakespeare's tragedies what *Much Ado About Nothing* is among his comedies. In *Measure for Measure*, it has a sardonic, cynical effect against the background of the emotion inherent in the plot.

Wit, however, is sparse in the Romances. The few puns and conceits that are there are, except in *The Winter's Tale* perhaps, unconscious and finely blent with poetry, which these plays seek to vindicate. Whether or not Shakespeare was trying to shape his final plays in accordance with the new found Jacobean style, we shall probably never know. But there is little doubt that he began an experiment of this kind in *Cymbeline* only to end it up with *The Tempest*, where it seems he reached perfection in this direction. However, the very nature of the subject matter of his final plays, exploring at once

the supernatural and the realistic planes and having to study the multifarious moods of apparently inexplicable nature posed for him a challenge that could be met with poetry only in which wit is likely to appear harsh. That seems to explain why there is in them no more the profusion of the early types of wit—sometimes decorative, artificial and sometimes of real service dramatically. So, where wit now occurs, it fits in with the situation—poetic or otherwise—extremely well. In this, of course, lies the distinctiveness of the wit in his last plays, though there is little essential difference between its composition here and that in the early comedies. Sebastian's joke with Gonzalo in *The Tempest*, comparing his intellect with his watch, and the other forms of witticisms he shoots are not without their precedents. His witty exuberance in the scene further indicates their tremendous, almost overflowing sense of relief at their miraculous escape. Miranda's unconscious pun on 'gentle' and 'fearful' noted by Mahood¹⁸ and Perdita's witty encounter recalling Juliet's would confirm the suggestion that Shakespeare's romantic heroines are naturally witty. I would like to conclude this essay with the observation that Shakespeare was a dramatist who seldom cast away anything ; by exploring nearly instinctively the same puns and conceits and other types of wit he to a great extent transformed them in his maturer and final plays.

If in this study Shakespeare's various clowns have been virtually overlooked, that is because they have already received considerable critical notice and their wit as such presents no baffling ambiguity. I have left out those common Elizabethan witticisms like Leonato's 'Her mother hath many times told me so' in reply to Don Pedro's question whether Hero is his daughter, though it at once sets the witty tone of the play in the very first scene. Also, one of the types of wit not considered here is that used by Mercutio to describe his mortal wound. The reason for these omissions is that their significance is not so profound as to merit a close examination in this brief essay, although here and there a witticism such as Mercutio's is not only indicative of one's character, and attitude to life and death, but also capable of filling us with a complex of emotions at the same time.

Certainly nobody will ever say that Shakespeare's greatness as a dramatist is because of his wit, but we shall do him injustice if in a critical assessment of his total genius we disregard its importance utterly. In respect of wit's dramatic use, as in many other respects, Shakespeare is a unique figure among his contemporaries.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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An interesting article on Whiter is the recent one by Mary Bell entitled "Walter Whiter's Notes on Shakespeare," in *Shakespeare Survey*, XX.
2. This, however, in no way suggests that Dr. Johnson had not a good ear for puns. In fact he could recognize even the subtlest of Shakespearean puns ; only he would deny them their dramatic validity.
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THE FIGURES OF LONELINESS IN WORDSWORTH *

NIRMALA SINHA

Lonely figures crowd all the different types of Wordsworth's poetry—narrative, descriptive and lyrical. No doubt, the theme of solitude is hardly surprising in the context of pre-Romantic and Romantic poetry. What is important, however, is that Wordsworth sings of solitude not merely in an abstract fashion ; he crystallizes his concern into "created characters" which, both quantitatively and qualitatively, form an obsessive pattern much more than Shelleyan idealists and Byronic heroes. Although Wordsworth frequently praises loneliness, he often strikes a different note too ; it can be for him something stark and stern, or neutral. It is significant that, idealized or not, solitude in his poetry stands as a necessary phase in the development of the human (or rather his own) soul towards the communion with Infinity ; this is borne out by his figures of loneliness. To establish my point, I shall make a selective survey of poems containing such figures. While these can be classified into a number of groups, they interlock among themselves. For my purpose, I shall divide these lonely figures into three broad groups : (a) non-human beings, (b) objectively created human characters who form the bulk of the figures, and (c) the Poet himself

The non-human creatures are idealisations of a rather simple sort. As instances of them, I shall select, from among a host, a section of one poem and four other small poems, of which three are about solitary birds and two about solitary flowers. The first is taken from the second part of the comparatively less known poem "Contrast" (Part II, Stanzas I and 2, p. 165), in which the Poet compares and contrasts two kinds of solitary birds—one, a caged parrot in a Lady's bower, and the other, a wren living alone in full freedom, but "not shunning man's abode, though shy/Almost as thought itself of human ken" (61.31-2.) Wordsworth finds the first bird fretting in its "gilded cage" but the wren is "self-contented", and like Hardy's Thrush, "sometimes gives/A slender unexpected strain" "To the bleak winds" of winter, though

* Page-references are to the Oxford Edition of *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson : O.U.P., 1913.

herself a "child of Spring". Unlike Hardy's Thrush, she does not "appear" and "is sought in vain". In the concluding line Wordsworth calls her "Nature's Darkling"—which is proof enough of the latter bird to be far happier, living in a more envied condition, than that of the caged bird "tended with nice care by lady fingers," "trilling her song with tutored powers." Standing as a kind of allegory of the opposition between eighteenth and nineteenth century attitudes to nature, this indeed makes a simple Wordsworthian affirmation of the true type of solitude which is inspired by communion with nature.

The other bird-figure is in the well-known 'the Cuckoo' (p. 183), whose "wandering voice", babbling "to the vale of sunshine and of flowers" (Stanzas 1 and 3) brings to the Poet fond memories of his childhood days, when he had sought to trace the "voice" a thousand times, but had failed. Wordsworth calls him "blessed", "blithe"—the alliteration of the adjectives links up the notions of joy and piety in solitude and also suggests the musicality of the bird, whose mysterious notes can turn the very much earthy earth to be "an unsubstantial faery place". The idea of a single solitary bird communicating joy around thus powerfully brings out Wordsworth's naturalistic idealism.

The same idea of solitude generating joy and bliss from the source of Nature is found in the figure of the Green Linnet in the poem of that name (p. 159), also well-known to all students of Wordsworth. But here a human note creeps in : the Cuckoo is invisible, so is the Wren, but the Green Linnet is visible, though often deceiving the Poet's "dazzled sight", when he could not distinguish it from the "dancing leaves" (ll.33-4), as it ranged "up and down the bowers" (l.19). Wordsworth repeatedly emphasizes its joyous loneliness. It is all alone ("thyself thy own enjoyment" (l.24)—and scatters "gladness without care" (l.22). He, the presiding spirit of the lovely unclouded spring day is 'sole' in his "employment" (l.20) of flitting gaily from bough to bough. He is an example of sublimated joy, "too blest with anyone to pair" (l.23). The poet is alone there, and so is the bird, but there is a mysterious communion between the nonhuman and the human : one imparting natural bliss and the other receiving grace abounding.

Of the two flower-poems, one is the second Daisy Poem ('To The Same Flower', p. 158). Here is a commonplace homeliness associated with Solitude and gladness contrasted with the faraway idealism of the birds. The poet sings of a single flower, an "unassuming common-place of Nature" with "a homely face", which is lovely with "a grace" which "love endows". In his fancy he gives her "many a fond and idle name", each of which suits the flower "best". "Starlike", the flower communes

with a sweet silence, "breathes with him the sun and air" and imparts to him a "share" of its "meek nature". The idea of homeliness and love, along with the communion between the object and the poet as in the case of the Green Linnet, brings the solitary symbol nearer humanity as well as indicative of a Christian attitude.

In "The Small Celandine" (p. 571) the poet strikes a different note. Normally, the flower (plant) like the Daisy, loves the sun and shrinks from cold and rain. But Wordsworth one day sees one "Standing forth an offering to the blast/And buffeted at will by rain and storm" (ll. 11-12). The poet stops and muses that "it is neither courage nor choice that has made the poor lonely flower not to seek its usual security of "close self-shelter", but old age, which has stiffened its tender limbs, and it cannot stop decay. The poem sounds a bleak note, as the aspect of solitude here is associated with the idea of the decay and inevitability of old age. It is no happy sight that meets Wordsworth's eyes: rather it brings to him a bitter awakening to the truth that nothing can stand against the evolutionary Laws of Nature.

No doubt, the solitary bird and flower-figures are conventional themes, but the Wordsworthian conceit re-vitalises the very conventionality into something rich and interesting. As we have seen, in general they are associated with feelings of joy, bliss, sweetness and light: judging by its past, even the Celandine comes of this tribe. What is the source of happiness of these lonely figures? We may ask, as did Wordsworth in a later context: "How shall I seek the origin?" (*Prelude*, ll. 1.346). It seems that the question itself suggests the answer, namely, these figures have found a mysterious fountain of joy in the very solitary state itself in which they live and play and sing; for, axiomatically, they are "Nature's own", free as Nature is free.

Next, the lonely human figures which are strewn in abundance in Wordsworth's Works. These are an advance upon the non-human figures. While the non-human figures are rather allegorical abstractions, these, being character portrayals, take adequate stock of the variety and the complexity of the *concrete* human situation. Finally, as we shall see, they stand as objective projections—not direct idealizations—of the Poet's attitude to life—of his ability to feel "for passions that were not my own" ("Michael", p. 31).

The first poem to be considered is "Resolution and Independence" ("The Leech-gatherer", p. 195). Here is a picture of something stark and dark and mysterious—enveloped with a strange nameless terror (from which an ordinary mind might recoil), embedded as it were in a bright sunny setting. The skylark warbling in the sky or the playful hare

racing on the moor, though bringing to him childhood memories, fails to chase away the melancholy that oppresses the poet's heart brooding on his uncertain future prospects. The happiness that lights up the face of Nature all around, rather intensifies, by way of contrast, the unhappy "lot" of Man awaiting the inevitability of Doom : of frustration, decay and death. He has been longing to be free from the "fear that kills" (provoked by his broodings on Coleridge, Chatterton, Burns as well as on his own fate). It was then that he sees a Man—the "oldest Man that ever wore grey hairs", "not all alive nor dead", who seems to be less a human being and more a Natural object—"a huge stone", "a sea-beast/crawled forth on a shelf of rock". "He is bent double by age" and is "motionless as a cloud :/That heareth not the loud winds,"/"upon the margin of that moorish flood" (stanzas VIII-XI).

The uncanny apparition must have struck the Poet with awe and terror, and it is only when the Man seems to uncoil himself and stirs a pool with a stick, that Wordsworth takes up the courage to address him. The Leech-gatherer looks up at him kindly with "Still vivid eyes", and when he answers to the Poet's queries, his "feeble words" comes in "Solemn order", with "a lofty utterance." His "stately speech" is "above the reach of ordinary men." He seems to be vested with a gentle dignity in spite of his solitary decrepitude, having heroically endured life's vicissitudes. The Man's words seem like the flow of a smooth-running stream which, for a time, lulls the Poet into inattentiveness—a fading in his awareness of physical existence (cf : "When the fleshly ear forgot her functioning" (*Prelude II*, ll. 415-416)). Noticing this, the Man, a bit surprised, repeated his words, and in a flash the Poet's imagination finds full freedom, and he seems to be touched by a divine grace, and is lifted up from the abyss to which he had been sunk.

In this poem, the words 'loneliness' or 'lonely', emphasised by reiteration, bring out the theme with great poignancy. Here, it is associated with fortitude, stoic resignation breathing through the bedrock of reality,—suffering and old age—and thus reaching hope and faith in God.

The central figure of "The Cumberland Beggar" (pp. 566-69)—also a very old man—is so old that he is past aging anymore. It is literally his second childhood. He is as innocent and devoid of sentiment as an infant. He is almost one with the "wild unpeopled hills" where he takes temporary rest to take his meagre humble food, which falls on the ground from "his palsied hand" and is shared greedily by "small mountain birds". He moves on, hat in hand, his almost sightless eyes bent on "one little span of earth", and that motion is the only indication

that he still lives. Yet, this derelict, far from being "useless", is an important functionary. His very loneliness, coupled with his helplessness, inspires humane considerations in all whom he passes by. All unconsciously, he rouses good impulses in them, long practice of which turns these impulses into habit, which

".....does the work
Of reason, yet prepares that after-joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,
Doth find herself insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness" (ll.100-105).

One important aspect of this figure is the association of human solitude with the solitude of Nature. As the inspirer of human sympathy it adds yet a new note. What is more important, unlike the Leech-gatherer, the Beggar's solitude does not suggest fortitude; but it is past fortitude or heroism, and is associated with a kind of *Nirvana*, a super-abnegation of the physical as well as spiritual self. The Beggar is free, even as Nature is free. The best setting for him is the solitude of the mountains, where wild birds sail on wilder winds in full freedom, though the old man in his decrepitude does not, in the least, react to his surroundings. He has ceased to suffer or feel, with all sensibilities lost. Perhaps Wordsworth has here created this figure as the embodiment of the palpably sheer aspect of Solitude.

The story of Michael (in "Michael", p. 131) is the tragedy of a broken-hearted father suffering intolerable ignominy and shame because of his only son. Like the Cumberland Beggar but in a different and more intense way, he shows a kinship between human and "natural" loneliness. His is a sublime personality reminding of the simple Biblical heroes. His home, The Evening Star, hangs on a mountain, which is "in truth an utter solitude". (l.13.) Once more, we find the stark, naked, barren aspect of Solitary Nature, not exactly terrifying, but which brings in its train a sense of awe, silencing trivial cries of woe and lamentations, and we seem to see the man's stature gathering an intensity of height from the mountain where he lived. He seems to be an integral part of the solitude. The end of Michael's career, after his estrangement with his son, consummates his loneliness, which is charged with fortitude, pathos and a heroic despair. What is also interesting is the pious note accompanying this solitude. He breathes religion as "natively" as the pure mountain air, and his solitary figure in the background of the unfinished "*Sheep-fold*" stands as enduring as the eternal hills.

The three human figures I have covered so far, no doubt reminds one of the Small Celandine. But while in the Small Celandine loneliness is only emblematic of old age, decay and death (mutability), the other three lonely figures, each in its own way develop the theme in a different and mature manner. All the three men are old : extreme old age has enveloped all three as with a vesture. To the Leech-gatherer, solitude coupled with old age imparts the remarkable dignity born of Resolution and Independence, and that in the most unassuming natural process. By the very fact that he exists, the Cumberland Beggar infuses the milk of human kindness in all he comes across and that too in the most unobtrusive natural way ; and to Michael it brings heroic fortitude, the eternal silence of the mountains investing him with a dignity all its own. These figures thus convey the rich complexity of human existence, which is not found in the flower-figure.

The Lucy Poems (pp. 109 and 187) are pieces where Wordsworth spiritualizes the solitary figure. She is "a mystic presence in the lonesome wild"—a presence diffused through both space and time. All her virtues are gifts of Nature herself who declared, so the poet says, "She shall be mine, and I will make/A lady of my own." Dwelling "among untrodden ways", like a "violet half-hidden from the eye", she "lived and died in the eye of Nature". She is endowed by Wordsworth with a super-sensuous personality. As a solitary she stands a perfect representative of that important part of Wordsworth's poetic attitude to life : his sympathy for the unfamiliar, humble aspects of life : neglected, yet in that very neglect the epitome of humanity ("fair as a star when only one" etc.) Lucy seems to stand as the ideal of Wordsworth's view of solitude in relation to Nature : as if, all that is best in Nature blooms best in loneliness. What is rather interesting is the elegiac note, the regret that breathes through Wordsworth's presentation of this solitary figure—as if such figures are worth pursuing as ideals, but are always fugitive, impalpable, evanescent.

"The Solitary Reaper" strikes a kindred note. The strange song—theme, and the strange girl "reaping and singing by herself" in the field would always remain a mystery to the poet as well as to the readers. Her solitariness envelops her with a diaphanous elusive veil of music which is at once strange and remote, albeit so deeply touching in the pathos and melancholy which is associated with her loneliness.

With the same strangeness is vested the unknown Solitary girl by the beacon on the summit of a hill in *The Prelude* (XII, ll. 245-59, p. 738), who bore a pitcher on her head, and walked against the wind, her dress buffeted, but poise maintained. It was a common, "an ordinary sight" ;

but by some strange mysterious power, the frightened child that the poet was then, was comforted and soothed. Wordsworth names such moments "Spots of Time" which "retain a renovating virtue when depressed." These spots of time, often found in connexion with the girl-figures (but elsewhere, too) are also related to solitude, which to Wordsworth seem to be worth pursuing, because of the mighty potencies these exercise on the human soul.¹

The solitary human figures created by Wordsworth are of varied types, having varied qualities. Out of the mass of human kind, he evokes a few individual characters to illustrate his favourite doctrine that there exists a reciprocity between Man and Nature. It is necessary for his purpose to place the characters in utter solitude, for it is there that Nature is best revealed. (Sometimes he adds suffering as a condition to enhance his point further.)

While this is partially brought out in some of the human figures already looked at, this reciprocal association between Nature and Solitude is perhaps best seen in *The Excursion*. Let us take some instances from its two major characters especially from the first two books: "The Wanderer" (Bk. I), and "The Solitary" (Bk. II).

The Wanderer (Bk. I), though living with quite a number of brothers and sisters, had early learnt to withdraw within himself. He went "to a school that stood *sole* building/High up on a mountain's *dreary* edge/*Remote* from view of city spire", returned home "*all alone*", "through the wood *with no one near*." On his way home, the lonely child "Saw the evening stars come one by one", frightened at darkness deepening, and magnifying the proportions of the objects around. The sights created indelible impressions on the child-mind, though he could not understand then the depth of the feelings aroused at the sights he saw. He eagerly drank into every sight and sound of Nature, and when he grew up a boy, he would often retire to "*Caves forlorn*. And mid the hollow depths of *naked* crags" to brood upon the sights and upon the feelings roused in him—trying to unravel the mysteries which seemed at once oppressive and fascinating. As a young man, the Wanderer "beheld from the *naked* top of some bold head-land" the sun rise up and bathe the earth and ocean with the glory of light, the sight of which "melted into him", and he thanked God fervently for creating him and receive all these gifts of blessedness. He seemed to have been "possessed" by this state of beatitude (ll. 122-76, 197-218 ; all the italics mine.)

This holy Communion with Nature in stark solitude had endowed him with a "Wisdom" which no book could supply, though he read

many. This filled him with a Wander-lust, and he was always on the move, learning great truths of life in his solitary trappings. For instance, that was how the Wanderer learned from the pitiful life-story of Margaret that even the Mother of Christ ("One...") "... in her worst distress/Had often times felt...../ The unbounded might of prayer and learned... /..... that consolation springs/From the meek Sufferer/". (*Excursion*, I, ll. 936-939).

The Wanderer is infused with "natural piety" from lessons of adversity, studying the lives of others. Incidentally, an interesting contrast is offered in "The Fountain" (p. 487) where the old Matthew learns to keep up a smiling appearance, often with a merry song on his lips—a solitary Joker in life's Circus, so to say, in the midst of sufferings of his own life : (cf. "By none/Am I enough beloved") for he had lost all his near and dear ones. He wore a face of joy because he had "been glad of Yore".

With the Wanderer—solitary as he is—is juxtaposed the Solitary (Bk. II) who may be said to be the arch-solitary among all the lonely human figures of Wordsworth : somewhat as Lucy stands in the centre of the girl-figures representing the mystic aspect of solitude.

The loneliness of the Solitary might be called somewhat negative : after sowing wild oats in many a crowded place and situation, he "Wastes the sad remainder of his hours/steeped in self-indulging spleen/" (ll. 309-310) "at safe distance from a world/not moving to his mind,"—as the Wanderer tells the Poet before the Solitary's appearance (ll.314-15.) The despondent or fatalistic attitude he himself derives from solitude further bears this out in some of the later books (e.g. Bk. III, ll. 984-91.) Yet, his self-imposed loneliness in the midst of Nature automatically assumes a cathartic function, so that even the Solitary has his moments of illumination.

The Solitary lives in a cottage which "had almost a *forbidding nakedness*", "dark and low" (which he calls his "domain, "cell", hermitage") ; strewn with a motley crowd of ("books, maps fossils, moss" to "instruments of music" and includes even "a shattered telescope") a lonely man's variegated interests. From the window can be viewed "two huge peaks," "lusty twins," who, and no human beings are his "prized companions". The Solitary explains how these "lofty brethren" "bear their part well in the wild concert" of the wind, chiefly when "the storm rides high", and "then they fill the upper air with roaring sound in an unceasing flow." But theirs also is the "Song of stream and headlong flood", and they also echo back (so the Solitary imagines) the rumbling of thunder-blast in "breath-

less hour of noon". It is there that the sun seems to take rest awhile, before taking the final dip in the western seas ; there the stars "peep and sparkle," and he listens to the "music of a finer tone," a silent harmony, a composition of clouds and mists and shadows, of sunlight, moonlight and star-light. With such a natural orchestra everpresent by his side to beguile his lonely existence, no wonder he loves his "cell" "better than a snail his house." (ll.640ff).

He tells his guests, how once in his quest for a man lost in a stormy night, he had a splendid vision. The search-party was lost in blinding mists, but towards the break of dawn. Suddenly, "a single step" "freed" him, and the vision that greeted his sight—of sky and clouds and shadows and early morning light was nothing short of the glorious Revelations "such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld/In vision" (ll.830-68.) The passage is too long to be quoted here, and it is to be read to appreciate its noble beauty. The Solitary is a natural poet, who has clear unclouded visions denied to common men, and this poetic spirit sustains him in his loneliness, as prayer and faith in God sustained the lonely Wanderer and kept up the buoyancy of his spirits. Notwithstanding his errors, the loneliness of the Solitary thus appears as the last phase in self-development⁸.

The foregoing illustrations show how different types of human solitaries crowd the pages of Wordsworth and how each in his own way illustrates the Poet's conception of loneliness. There is the group of old men, whose spirits "age cannot wither nor time decay". There is the group of young girls who emanate a sense of other-worldliness. There is the group of self-imposed recluses communing with the spirit of Nature. Revealing the mysteries of "Man, the heart of Man and human life" ("Michael," l. 33) they are all manifestations of human nature in the grand setting of Nature.

Finally, we come down to the poet as a lonely figure : the *poet in* his works, who, wandering "lonely as a cloud", is the companion of the Wanderer, looks at Cuckoos and daisies, reflects on Michael and the Leech-gatherer and so forth. As this "poet" reveals himself best in *The Prelude*, I shall take my instances from some portions of that poem (1850 edn.) As a child of fire he "made one long bathing of a summer's day/Basked in the sun and plunged and plunged again" and "stood all alone/Beneath the sky.....a naked savage" (l, ll.288-300.) Then again, a boy barely ten years old, he would "range the open heights", "through half the frosty night, to steal snared wood-cocks belonging to other people, A strong feeling would well up within him that he had been an intruder there, disturbing the peace of that place ; and we

all know, how he heard among the solitary hills, low breathings seeming to dog his steps. He had like sensations time and again, as he hung on dangerous precipices bird-nesting, and the mountain-top seemed to raise its head higher and higher, and chase him in black admonition, as he "with trembling oar" turned back in his stolen boat. Like the Wanderer, he too, in his childhood and boyhood felt the solitude peopled with "presences" that dazed his mind—"mysterious presences" (created by "higher minds") emanating from Nature, sometimes benignant (as in the bathing and skating scenes), sometimes malignant (as in the bird-nesting and boat-stealing episodes).

There are many characteristic incidents recorded in the first two Books of "The Prelude" which tell us of the growth of the sensibilities of the Boy, when from sheer fascination for rural objects, he began to seek Nature "for her own sake" (cf : "The Simplon Pass," "The Tintern Abbey" etc.) In all such cases, solitude becomes intimately associated with mystic revelations. He seemed to withdraw more and more within himself as a boy, a youth, also as a grown-up man (like the Wanderer) and mused upon the strange sensations he had felt : e.g.

"..... when the vale
Yet slumbering, lay in an utter solitude,
How shall I seek the origin ? Where find
Faith in the marvellous things which then I felt ?"
(*Prelude*, II, ll. 344-347. P. 647)

Often a "holy calm" overspread his soul, so much so

".....that bodily eyes
were utterly forgotten, and what I saw,
Appeared like something in myself, a dream
A prospect in mind". (*Prelude*, II, ll. 349-352.)

He realised in that dream-state of solitude, that "A plastic power abode with" him; that "An auxiliar light" came from his mind, "Which on the setting Sun/Bestowed new splendour" and "the midnight storm/Grew darker in the presence of my eye" (*Prelude*, II, ll. 362 ff)

In moments like these he was overwhelmed with bliss "ineffable" and he

" felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that Seemeth still" (*Prelude*, II, 400-401)

He is convinced that thus does Revelation come in solitude and he communes "with every form of creature" through earth and heaven, who sang

"One song..... and it was audible
Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear
.....forget her functions" (*Prelude*, II, ll. 415-16, P. 648)

Just as the Solitary had his ears attuned to the orchestral music of his "Prized companions", Wordsworth also could listen to the "still sad music of humanity". He felt raptures similar to what the Solitary had felt, when in Summer vacation, returning alone after a night's revelry, he had a realization that "he made no vows, but vows were made for him", that he "should be a dedicated spirit" (*Prelude*, IV, ll. 308-338, P. 663) Later, when climbing the Snowdon, just one step taken by him brought him out of the mists (cf: the experience of the Solitary) and the splendid moonlit vista spread before his sight, brought the Infinite close to him (*Prelude*, XIV, ll. 38-68.) He was alone then ("And I..... as chanced, the foremost of the band", etc.) and in that sublime solitude was convinced that "both the enduring and the transient... build up greatest things/From least suggestions" (*Prelude*, XIV, ll.99-101 ; P, 747).

We are already acquainted with the incident, when the sight of the unknown woman on the lonely "wide moor" served as the touch of a healing presence, which dispelled all his childish fears of being lost in an alien place (*Prelude*, XII.) Further towards the end of the same book, Wordsworth recounts another incident, when he waited impatiently and peevishly for the "led palfreys" that should bear himself and his brother home. He took a shortcut path to a crag, which commanded a better view of the road through which the attendants would come. It was a tempestuous day and he sat alone fuming and fretting, with "a single sheep" on his right and "a blasted hawthorn" on his left. It was another "Spot of Time" which brought a bitter lesson to him (*Prelude* XII, ll. 286-316, pp. 738-739).

This it seems that Wordsworth wishes to convey through all these records is, that all that is obscure, impalpable, mysterious, inexplicable ; all that is Nameless, yet "felt within the blood and along the heart" find full realisation only in solitude, for loneliness sharpens the sensibilities otherwise deadened in sophistication.

But does Solitude mean merely an absence or escape from company? Surely not, at least for Wordsworth. Once more, like the Wanderer, he felt in his maturer years that, to him, Solitude being associated with mystic 'presences', is psychic rather than external. For instance, when he muses upon his boyhood pleasures and pranks, he seems to have "Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself/And of some other Being" (II, ll. 32-33) Even in the company of other boys running "a boisterous course on the Windermere/with rival course", he says at the end of the sport, "I was taught to feel perhaps too much/The *self-sufficing* power of solitude" (*italic mine.*) In company with other boys of his age-

groups, he rode on horses, galloped "in uncouth race" through the "temple where the Druids worshipped" or through the ruins of St. Mary's Abbey or "beat with thundering hoofs the level sand", he felt the "presence" of the spirit of rocks and streams.

Even when he grew older and took up his residence in London, he felt the same Presence that comes to the loneliness of the soul. In London also, where "thousands and thousands of her sons", live "amid the same perpetual whirl/of trivial objects", and "though the picture weary out the eye" he felt "the spirit of Nature" revealed to him as "The Soul of Beauty and enduing life/Diffusing Composure, and ennobling Harmony", "through the press of self-destroying things" (VII, ll. 722-71.)

Wordsworth had sung of solitary spots of time, of Solitary places, of Solitary birds and plants, of Solitary human beings. As we have seen, he himself stands distinguished from most of the Solitary figures. While the other figures communicate something, good or otherwise, to the poet, he himself communes with the Infinite, the communion inspired by his solitude (somewhat like the Wanderer, but more so.)

* * *

I hope, I have shown that no total picture of Wordsworth is possible without taking into account the theme of loneliness as suggested by his Solitaries. As we have seen above, Solitude forms a nexus between Nature, life, and man in his study of them. This indeed confirms what Wordsworth himself said of his poetic purpose: "On Man, on Nature and on Human Life,/musing in Solitude....." (*The Recluse*, ll. 1-2) It is interesting to notice that, as visualised by Wordsworth, several types of loneliness cut across the various figures: highsoaring, thrilling, glad (e.g. *The Green Linnet*); homely, meek, glad (e.g. *The Daisy*); Stark, bleak (e.g. *Small Celandine*, *Michael*); encouraging fortitude and hope, though in suffering (e.g. *Leech-gatherer*); mystic, diversely (e.g. *Lucy*, *The Wanderer*, but above all the poet). The dates of the poems, being simultaneous (roughly 1800-1807—the ripe period of his creativity), suggest that Wordsworth's mind had been at the same time moving across the different aspects of loneliness. However, it is possible to trace a kind of lateral development in them from simple idealism to ideas of suffering, to spiritual function associated with solitude, with the "poets" mysticism standing as the culminating point. The despondent, negative, gloomy loneliness of the Solitary (notwithstanding his inspired moments) suggests that by 1814 (the date of publication of *The Excursion*), when Wordsworth's inspiration had flagged for whatever reason or reasons—he may have looked at another aspect and split

himself into two : so that The Solitary had to be created though to be corrected by The Wanderer and others.

What, one may ask, was the reason of this obsession with loneliness and lonely figures ? It is possible that after his disillusion, after Annette Vallon, after the French Revolution, Wordsworth had a feeling of alienation from external stimuli for inspiration. He might have tried to look at his own alienation from different angles and sublimate it in the different lonely figures. Whether that be true or not, the obsession appears to have turned these figures of loneliness collectively into a figure in another sense—a metaphor—through which he translated his views of life.

One thing however stands prominent ; the poet is the most central solitary figure. He had visitations and visions in loneliness, the like of which had come too often to Man in the earlier days, throughout the world, and which he (the primitive man) tried to explain by creating rich myths, giving each like experience and sensation "a local habitation and a name". Although Wordsworth could not offer to the sophisticated nineteenth century the wonderful raptures of primitive myths, the fact that his imagination was similarly emancipated in exalted lonely moments¹ of inspiration is surely suggestive. Secondly, we cannot just overlook one fact : he shared his own loneliness with his solitaires (no matter if they are his own projections). He learned to feel with them, whose hearts he could read like "open books", and it is this "widest commonalty felt" which had opened his vision of the Infinite. And including himself in the gallery of the lonely figures Wordsworth has flung the dimensions of his poetic world to further reaches, which is rarely to be found among the English poets.⁴

NOTES

1. Somehow this poem reminds of "The Small Celandine" and of the Story of Margaret (*Excursion*, 1814 edition : Bk. I, p. 756 ff.) Is it by way of contrast ?—or does it reveal the Poet's development of mind—from despair generating in bitterness to hope rising up from the ashes of despondency ?

2. There is no sufficient scope here for dealing with Solitary Spots of Time and Solitary Places—also found interspersed in Wordsworth's poetry—specially in the Prelude.

3. There is also the Pastor (*Excursion* Bk. V. pp. 822-37) who later gives an eloquent "account of the harmonising influence of Solitude upon two men of opposite principles" (Bk. VI). Both these figures (Wanderer and Solitary) are projections of two types of the poet. (The Poet himself is one of the four characters of the poem). But space does not permit to dwell on all the Books of the *Excursion*.

4. A random selection of some other characteristic poems where lonely figures are found : (i) 'Characteristics of a Child Three years old' (ii), 'Alice Fell,' (iii) 'Lucy Gray,' (iv) 'We are Seven,' (v) 'The Norman Boy,' (vi) 'The Poet's Dream,' (vii) 'Stanzas' (The Boy figure), (viii) 'The Forsaken Indian Woman,' : 'The Complaint,' (ix) 'Affliction of Margaret,' (x) 'The Childless Father,' (xi) 'The Idiot Boy,' (xii) 'The Widow of Windermere'side,' (xiii) 'Her eyes are wild,' (xiv) 'The Danish Boy,' (xv) 'Nutting,' (xvi) 'Ruth,' (xvii) 'The Thorn,' (xviii) 'Laodamia,' (xix) 'Simon Lee,' (xx) 'The Happy Warrior,' (xxi) 'I know an aged Man' etc : also a large number strewn in the pages of *The Prelude* and elsewhere.

WORDSWORTH THE *KAVI* AND HIS RELEVANCE TODAY

PRADIP BHATTACHARYA

‘The Irrelevance of Wordsworth Today’ was one of the papers read out at a recent inter-collegiate seminar held on the occasion of Wordsworth’s birth bi-centenary. The speaker, Miss Tilottama Mukherjee of Loreto College, argued that conditions had changed so completely since Wordsworth’s times that nothing he had said could be meaningful in the context of the present human situation. It has been frequently argued that in his view of religion and society Wordsworth is severely hedged in by many walls of convention which make him more a poet of his age than of the future. However, it is what the poet sees and feels, not what he intellectually formulates, which is the real essence of his poetry. And what Wordsworth, the seer-poet, saw and felt is, we shall see, of great significance to an age in which, fed up with technological culture, man is groping for something which will give meaning to life, make it worth living, give it a sense of direction and purpose. The occasion of the bi-centenary of his birth provides us with an excellent opportunity for recognising, at long last, that Wordsworth is the first seer-poet in English literature, the first English *kavi*. To the ancients it was obvious that poetry is, in reality, not so much a “making”, a composition, as a revelation of something which eternally exists¹. Knowing this, they used the same word to describe the poet and prophet, the creator and seer; *vates*, *sophos*, *kavi*. Wordsworth himself is fully conscious of the revelatory and inspirational nature of poetry² :

If thou partake the animating faith
That poets, even as Prophets, each with each
Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
Have each his own peculiar faculty,
Heaven’s gift, a sense that fits him to perceive
Objects unseen before...
A privilege whereby a work of his,
Proceeding from a source of untaught things,
Creative and enduring...

It is not surprising that this aspect of Wordsworth should so long have been neglected. The Occidental *weltanschauung* regards the external life of the mind and the senses as alone of importance, as the sole reality. Hence it sees the mystic as one who gets lost in a self-made chimerical world of visions and hallucinations. It is argued that the mystic's experiences are purely subjective and not scientifically verifiable, hence they are unreal and irrational. To the Western mind, the truths the mystic speaks of are either unintelligible, or are regarded as nebulous abstractions and poetic fancies. Thus it has been the fate of the mystic in the West to be, at best, taken notice of superficially, condescendingly, by "self-applauding intellects"⁸ who

Effeminately level down the truth
To certain general notions...
Through want of better knowledge in the heads
That framed them.⁴

What is frequently forgotten is that the mystic's goal is to acquire knowledge of his soul and of the supreme Truth of creation : a knowledge which cannot be arrived at by an approach based on the senses and on surface-reality. Such an insight is only possible through an inward gaze, through an intuitive contact with the Truth itself, or through direct knowledge by identification of the mystic's *atman* with the *Brahman*. In other words, for appreciating a mystic like Wordsworth, what is required is not the Occidental but the Oriental view of life.

It is only natural, therefore, that the first recognition of the *kavi* Wordsworth should have come from the East, from another seer-poet, Sri Aurobindo, in his regrettably short study of the great Romantic in his *The Future Poetry*⁵. More recently, in 1970 itself, there have been, in India, two remarkable appreciations of the significance of Wordsworth. One is a poem, "To William Wordsworth", by one of the finest of our young poets, Sukanta Chaudhuri⁶. The other is a brilliant study of Wordsworth in the January and February issues of *Mother India* by Mr K. D. Sethna. Mr Sethna, incidentally, provides us with an excellent definition of the *kavi*⁷ : "One who has known by direct intuition and by intimate personal realisation and by concrete entry of consciousness a Divine Reality at once emanating, containing and pervading the universe, an Existence that is an infinite Consciousness and eternal Bliss and the secret Self of all things and beings." Unfortunately, neither Sri Aurobindo, nor Mr Sethna have discussed this aspect of Wordsworth at length. In the present study, I propose to approach Wordsworth from the view-point of Hindu mysticism because, approached from this angle, his poetry becomes crucially relevant and meaningful for the

modern man in search for a richer order than what mere technology can provide, for a more organic sense of meaning in life.

At the outset it would be well to keep in mind that mysticism is not something which can be appreciated or experienced purely through the intellect, for the simple reason that knowledge based on the rational faculty cannot stretch beyond the mental domain. To extend it to infinity would be to snap it, as Yajnavalkya bluntly tells Gargi in reply to her incessant renewal of queries: "If you do not stop, your head will fall off."⁸ Mystic truth must be approached through the heart, which is to guide and inspire the mind. This heart is not, of course, the external seat of emotions, but the *antarhrdaya* of the Upanishads, the secret inner spark of divine consciousness which is the source, the fount of our true personality. This is what lies behind Wordsworth's statement that "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". And when he says that it "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility", he is referring to the withdrawal of the consciousness into a secret, subtle inner world, and its re-appearance with the treasures gathered there⁹. Genuine poetry, as Wordsworth well knew, cannot be produced by intellectual labour.

It should also be kept in mind that mystic experiences are not imaginary mathematical abstractions like $\sqrt{-1}$. What to the ordinary understanding is a metaphysical abstraction, or a nebulous poetic fancy, is to the mystic an intimate and concrete reality: "To the mystic there is no such thing as an abstraction. Everything which to the intellectual mind is abstract, has a concreteness, substantiality, which is more real than the sensible form of an object or of a physical event...The mystical poet can only describe what he has felt, seen in himself or others, or in the world, just as he has felt or seen it or experienced through exact vision, close contact or identity and leave it to the general reader to understand or not understand or misunderstand according to his capacity."¹⁰ The last two alternatives, unfortunately, have been the bane of both Wordsworth's and Sri Aurobindo's poetry among the majority of readers, despite their assurance that they are

Speaking no dream, but things oracular;
Matter not lightly to be heard by those
Who to the letter of the outward promise
Do read the invisible soul.¹¹

To approach Wordsworth from the standpoint of Indian mysticism is to be surprised by joy, for here in an alien culture we discover a kindred spirit, and the East and the West merge in the oneness of mystical experiences. Unlike the Occidental artist, the Oriental concentrates only

on those facets, those objects of external nature which "while charming him, give rise to an inner vision or experience in him".¹³ It is, as Wordsworth writes in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, "The feeling therein developed (which) gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feelings" the latter being the case with English poetry up to his times. What is even more remarkable is how Sri Aurobindo's description of the artist with spiritual vision perfectly fits Wordsworth¹⁴ : "Behind a few figures, a few trees, and rocks, the supreme Intelligence, the supreme Imagination, the supreme Energy lurks, acts, feels, is, and, if the artist has the spiritual vision, he can see it and suggest perfectly the great mysterious Life... full of a mastering intention in that which appears blind and unconscious". And this is Wordsworth at the beginning of Book IX of *The Excursion* :

To every Form of Being is assigned...
An active Principle :—howe'er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists
In all things, in all natures ; in the stars
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
The moving waters, and the invisible air..
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude ; from link to link
It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.

Earlier, in *The Prelude*, Book III, ll. 127-132, he speaks of the same vision in personal terms :

To every natural form, rock, fruit or flower,
Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
I gave a moral life : I saw them feel,
Or linked to some feeling : the great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning,—

and again in Book II (ll. 401-409) :

I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still ;
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart :
O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
Or beats the gladsome air ; o'er all that glides

Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
And mighty depth of waters.

It is precisely this spiritual revelation which Arjuna obtains from Lord Krishna : "I am taste in the waters, O son of Kunti, I am the light of sun and moon, I am pranava in all the Vedas, sound in ether and manhood in men. I am pure scent in earth and energy of light in fire ; I am life in all existences, I am the ascetic force of those who do askes is. Know Me to be the eternal seed of all existences, O son of Pritha. I am the intelligence of the intelligent, the energy of the energetic. I am the strength of the strong devoid of desire and liking. I am in beings, the desire which is not contrary to dharma, O Lord of the Bharatas."¹⁴ " I, O Gudakesha, am the self which abides within all beings. I am the beginning and middle and end of all beings...And whatsoever is the seed of all existences, that am I, O Arjuna ; nothing moving or unmoving, animate or inanimate in the world can be without Me."^{14a}

It has always intrigued readers why natural objects thrilled Wordsworth so deeply and moved him so powerfully. "Panttheism" is not a very satisfactory way of explaining what is hinted at in these lines from his "Written in Early Spring" ;

And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes...
The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air ;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

What lies behind this has been brought out clearly by a greater *kavi* while describing the tender sapling shooting upwards from its underground prison¹⁵ :

A blissful yearning riots in its leaves,
A magic passion trembles in its blooms,
Its boughs aspire in hushed felicity.
An occult godhead of this beauty is cause,
The spirit and intimate guest of all this charm,
This sweetness's priestess and this reverie's muse.
Invisibly protected from our sense
The Dryad lives drenched in a deeper ray
And feels another air of storms and calms
And quivers inwardly with mystic rain. (italics mine)

When Wordsworth speaks of seeing that Nature not only beautifies the inner being of her charges, but that she

wants not the power
 To consecrate, if we have eyes to see,
 The outside of her creatures, and to breathe
 Grandeur upon the very humblest face
 Of human life,—¹⁶

he is echoing the Indian mystic vision of the Divine love and joy which pulsates through all creation, the common and the shabby no less than the lofty and the beautiful, uplifting all :

I heard
 From mouths of men obscure and lowly, truths
 Replete with honour...
 There saw into the depth of human souls,
 Souls that appear to have no depth at all
 To careless eyes.¹⁷

Is it not akin to what Krishna tells Arjuna :¹⁸ "Deluded minds despise me lodged in the human body because they know not my supreme nature of being, Lord of all existences"?

Further, when Wordsworth confidently states that because of such mystic insights into the Truth behind the surface-reality, brought about through contact with Nature,

The Genius of the Poet hence
 May boldly take his way among mankind
 Wherever Nature leads—¹⁹

he is not sentimentally deluding himself. Here is another mystic poet who asserts a kindred faith in Nature, and his enumeration of the different experiences brought about through natural communion are remarkably parallel to Wordsworth's²⁰: "It is always through the creations of Nature, through her bountiful gifts and graces that art steals into our heart. At first it is an enjoyment of the creations of Nature ('drinking in a pure/Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths/Of curling mist'²¹) and then an experience of the aesthetic delight ('never dreamt of aught/More grand, more fair, more exquisitely framed/Than those few nooks...' ²²), and, last a concentration on the experience giving birth to the creative impulse ('An auxiliary light/Came from my mind, which on the setting sun/Bestowed new splendour'²³)."

The question naturally arises as to what the process was by which Wordsworth came to experience such mystic insights. The indications of the process which we discover from his poetry are exactly analogous to that described by our ancient *rishis*. According to the Hindu philosophers, there is a sixth sense, a master-sense, the *manas*²⁴, which generally uses the sense-organs for gaining experiences, yet is capable of

going beyond them for a direct perception when the sense-organs are silenced. This intuitive grasp of knowledge is the result of identification with the object of perception. The consciousness is said to possess a dual power : the power of apprehension (*prajnana*) and the power of comprehension (*vijnana*)³⁵. *Prajnana* sets the object of apprehension away, separate from itself, grasping only the surface reality because the mind is capable only of this. *Vijnana*, on the other hand, embraces the object within itself, penetrating to its very essence by wholly identifying itself with it, thus becoming it, living it, loving it. That is why the mystic's knowledge is part of his very being, not a knowledge abstract and remote, but living, intimate and concrete, pulsating with a "bliss ineffable" :

high the transport, great the joy I felt,
Communing in this sort through earth and heaven
With every form of creature, as it looked
Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
Of adoration, with an eye of love.³⁶

These are the moments when the *kavi's* soul visits
moon-flame oceans of swift fathomless Bliss...
We meet the ecstasy of the Godhead's touch
In golden privacies of immortal fire.³⁷

It is a state which the Gita describes as "That in which the soul knows its own true and exceeding bliss, which is perceived by the intelligence (i.e. not the intellect but the *manas*) and is beyond the sense, wherein established, it can no longer fall away from the spiritual truth of its being" (VI.21).

If we go through Wordsworth's "There was a Boy" and De Quincey's description of the Dunmail Raise episode³⁸, the process by which Wordsworth came to have these experiences becomes clear. De Quincey tells us that on Dunmail Raise, Wordsworth frequently put his ear to the ground to catch the rumbling of wheels far off. Once, as he was rising from the ground, he suddenly saw a bright star, and for several moment stood looking at it intently, and then remarked : "I have remarked, from my earliest days, that, if under any circumstances the attention is energetically braced up to an act of steady observation, should suddenly relax, at that moment any beautiful, any impressive visual object, or collection of objects, falling upon the eye, is carried to the heart with a power not known under other circumstances...the bright star . fell suddenly upon my eye and penetrated my capacity of apprehension with a pathos and a sense of the infinite, that would not have arrested me under other circumstances." Similarly, the

boy, mimicking the hoots of owls, waits anxiously for the riotous response :

The, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung,
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents ; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

What is happening here is, that at first the *manas* makes contact, as usual, through the external senses and then takes over for a direct comprehension of the inner truth of things by using the inner senses (*sukshma-indriya*). Such direct cognisance is usually impossible when the external senses are functioning and has to be brought about by "throwing the waking mind into a state of sleep which liberates the true or subliminal mind."²⁰ In the instances described above, the sudden shock of surprise induces a certain break in the normal functioning of Wordsworth's external senses :

the light of sense
Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
The invisible world.²⁰

At such moments all creation seems to be singing its adoration of the Divine :

One song they sang, and it was audible,
Most audible then when the fleshly ear
O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain
Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed,²¹

And thus he perceives that invisible mystic reality which
lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart.²²

The intellect itself is stilled at such moments :

in such high hour
Of visitation from the Living God,
Thought was not.²³

The most detailed description of such experiences is given in "Tintern Abbey" :

that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight

Of all this unintelligible world,
 Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,—
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul :
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.

The validity of such a *samadhi* state can be easily tested by comparing Wordsworth's account of his experiences with what Hindu philosophy has to say about such phenomenon. Sankaracharya, commenting on the *Gita*, VI, 20, says: "When the confusing play of ideas and emotions has come to rest, and he thus through himself (without the senses) through the purified 'inner organ' (the *manas*) apprehends the Highest, which is wholly spirit, essentially light, then he wins through to joy."³⁴ The *Gita* itself is even clearer in VIII. 12-13: "All the doors of the senses closed, the mind shut in into the heart, the life-force taken up out of its diffused movement into the head, the intelligence concentrated in the utterance of the sacred syllable OM and its conceptive thought in the remembrance of the supreme Godhead, he who goes forth, abandoning the body, he attains to the highest status."

Wordsworth's experiences become yet more convincing and more intelligible when we see what India's greatest seer-poet writes in his epic *Savitri*. Like Wordsworth, he too asserts that this apparently "unintelligible world" does have a definite meaning and a clearly defined purpose,

But all is screened, subliminal, mystical ;
 It needs the intuitive heart, the inward turn,
 It needs the power of a spiritual gaze.
 Else to our waking mind's small moment look
 A goalless voyage seems our dubious course...³⁵

And he tells us, like Wordsworth, how this "spiritual gaze" works, and what it sees, in almost identical terms :

In the dead wall closing us from wider self,
Into a secrecy of apparent sleep,
 The mystic tract beyond our waking thoughts,
 A door parted, built in by Matter's force,
Releasing things unseized by earthly sense :
 A world unseen, unknown by outward mind
 Appeared in the silent spaces of the soul.³⁶

And

in some deep internal solitude

Witnessed by *a strange immaterial sense*,

The signals of eternity appear.

The truth mind could not know unveils its face,

We hear what mortal ears have never heard,

We feel what earthly sense has never felt,

We love what common hearts repel and dread ;

Our minds hush to a bright Omniscient ;

A Voice calls from the chambers of the Soul.³⁷ (italics mine)

Again, like Wordsworth, Sri Aurobindo states that such truths are visible only when the intellect has stopped functioning :

A soul not wrapped in its cloak of mind

Could glimpse the true sense of a world of forms,

Upbuoyed by the heart's understanding flame,

It could hold in the conscious ether of the spirit

The divinity of a symbol universe.³⁸

All Nature was a conscious front of God :³⁹

Wordsworth, too, sees the entire natural world as a symbol of the Divine : the waterfalls, the woods, the forests, the torrents, the rocks and crags and raging streams, the unfettered clouds, night and day, all are to him

Characters of the great Apocalypse,

The types and symbols of Eternity

Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.⁴⁰

And again he speaks of

Nature's self, which is the breath of God,

Or His pure Word, by miracle revealed ⁴¹

But these insights come only when unsought and cannot be arrived at by any conscious intellectual effort, as both the *kavis* assert firmly :

that happy stillness of mind

Which fits him to receive it when unsought.⁴²

This Light comes not by struggle or by thought ;

In the mind's silence the Transcendent acts

And the hushed heart hears the unuttered Word.⁴³

It is because Wordsworth discovers behind the object something more than what it appears to be, because he contacts the supreme Harmony underlying all creation, that he contends that even the lowliest of things, even the ass, the idiot boy, the leech-gatherer or the beggar can be subject-matter for the poet ; for in all he can discover and reveal the Beauty that is truly everywhere ;

There saw into the depth of human souls,
Souls that appear to have no depth at all
To careless eyes.⁴⁴

This insight into the Divine Beauty in all things has been brilliantly expressed by Sri Aurobindo in the form of aphorisms⁴⁵ : "God had opened my eyes ; for I saw the nobility of the vulgar, the attractiveness of the repellent, the perfection of the maimed and the beauty of the hideous. When the divine Reality is seen behind external deformations, it appears so powerfully that it succeeds in effacing what generally veils it to the ordinary mind...*When I had the dividing Reason I shrank from many things* ; after I had lost it in sight, I hunted through the world for the ugly and the repellent but I could no longer find them." This mystic perception, along with the solitude, stark majesty and utter simplicity which characterised his spiritual experiences, lie behind Wordsworth's revolutionary decision to choose the rude, simple rustics as the subjects of his poems, and to use their bare yet pregnant language as the vehicle of his ideas and emotions.

It is, indeed, highly significant that almost all of Wordsworth's mystic experiences are connected with mountain-scenery. The *Prelude* teems with such instances, and, in general, mountains appear in the background and setting of the best of his poetry, as in "Nutting", "The Highland Reaper", "Daffodils", "To the Cuckoo", and so on. The reason for this lies partly in the solemn spell cast by the grand solitude and stark, chaste majesty of the mountains. Arnold's remark that Wordsworth's poetry "is bald as the bare mountain tops are bald, with a baldness which is full of grandeur",⁴⁶ is a remarkably perceptive comment indeed. However, beyond this obvious fact, there is also a symbolic significance of the mountain which is probably the real cause of its ubiquitous presence in Wordsworth's inspired poetry. The mountain's soaring pyramidal height, reaching up to sky, is a mystic symbol of the human consciousness aspiring towards the Divine Consciousness, all human faculties concentrating and rising to that single intense peak of single-minded aspiration. This is by no means as fanciful an interpretation as it might seem to be at first. It is supported by a spiritual seer of the stature of Sri Aurobindo who adopted as part of his symbol this very pyramidal structure reaching upwards in a straining for the Infinite. And, it while climbing up a mountain-side that Wordsworth has one of his most memorable experiences, set-off by the sudden sight of

The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without a cloud, and at my feet

Rested a silent sea of hoary mist ..
 There I beheld the emblem of a mind
 That feeds upon infinity...⁴⁷

In harmony with this background of mountain-scenery, Wordsworth sets his figures in solitude and silence, as, for instance, the solitary reaper, Lucy who "dwelt among the untrodden ways", the leech-gatherer, Michael; Wordsworth himself, wandering "lonely as a cloud", fascinated by solitary cliffs and "Souls of lonely places"⁴⁸ and by scenes

When vapours rolling down the valley made
 A lonely scene more lonesome .⁴⁹

And his projected magnum opus had as its theme Wordsworth
 On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life
 Musing in solitude...⁵⁰

Along with solitary surroundings goes the insistence on simplicity. Wordsworth chooses rustic life for his theme because there the elemental passions "co-exist in a state of greater simplicity" and speak "a plainer and more emphatic language", as he writes in his *Preface*. The emphasis on simplicity is rubbed home through the iteration of the word "naked" in his poetry. To contact the Divine Reality, the mind must be stripped bare of all non-essentials :

Gently did my soul
 Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood
 Naked as in the presence of her God.⁵¹

A mystic vision is inspired by the sight of the moon as it "hung naked in a firmament". It seems Wordsworth perceived the still mind as "naked" of its normal movements, thus enabling a direct comprehension of the object's essence by his soul. Besides this, he speaks of naked huts, naked pools, naked valleys, a naked crag, the naked top of a headland, and so on, using the word nearly a hundred times—at a random count—in the *Prelude* itself.

We may now proceed to discuss the two possible paths to mystic experiences mentioned in Hindu philosophy⁵²: the inward or introspective vision (soul-mysticism) and the outward way of unifying vision (*Brahman*-mysticism). Often the two ways can merge into one as it is realised that the *Ekam-Brahman* in and behind the creation is also the inner psychic being, the *atman* (*sa atma ; tat tvam asi ;*—'That is the self ; That art thou'). This realization finds expression in the Yajnavalkya-Maitrayee discourse in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, as also in the *Gita*, XIII. 16 : "That which is in us is he

and all that we experience outside ourselves is he. The inward and the outward, the far and the near, the moving and the unmoving, all this he is at once. He is the subtlety of the subtle which is beyond our (intellectual) knowledge." Wordsworth expresses the same fusion of the two visions in this fragment retrieved by Mr H. de Selincourt⁵³

One interior life

In which all beings live with God, themselves
Are God, existing in the mighty whole,
As undistinguishable as the cloudless east
At noon is from the cloudless west, when all
The hemisphere is one cerulean blue.

In our Indian *Kavi*, we find the same fusion : —

The supreme's gaze looked out through human eyes
And saw all things and creatures as itself
And knew all thought and word as its own voice.^{53a}

In the first way, the introspective way, one sinks inward in order to find the true self, the *atman*, which leads to contacting the Divine Reality (*atmani atmanam atmana*). For this experience, one withdraws oneself from all sense-impressions and thought activity, as Wordsworth and Sri Aurobindo describe :

turning the mind in upon herself ..felt

Incumbencies more awful, visitings
Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul
That tolerates the indignities of Time,
And, from the centre of Eternity
All finite motions overruling, lives
In glory immutable.⁵⁴

And sometimes, when our sight is turned within,
Earth's ignorant veil is lifted from our eyes...
A stillness falls upon the instruments...
Knowledge breaks through trailing its radiant seas...
In moments when the inner lamps are lit
And the life's cherished guests are left outside.
Our spirit sits alone and speaks to its gulfs...
Invading from spiritual silences
A ray of the timeless Glory stoops awhile
To commune with our seized illumined clay
And leaves its huge white stamp upon our lives...
It leaves us one with Nature and with God.⁵⁵

The other way, that of the unifying vision (*ekata-drishti*), sees the

whole universe as the One. In the words of the *Gita*: "His hands and feet are on every side of us, his heads and eyes and faces are those innumerable visages which we see wherever we turn, his ear is everywhere, he immeasurably fills and surrounds all this world with himself, he is the universal Being in whose embrace we live" (XIII, 14). And again in X, 39: "And whatsoever is the seed of all existences, that am I, O Arjuna; nothing moving or unmoving, animate or inanimate in the world can be without Me." Wordsworth expresses this in "Tintern Abbey" as:

a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

The next stage in this outward way is the identification of the perceiver with the perceived, seeing all things in himself, or, more precisely, as himself (*anyad na pasyati*: 'he perceives no other'):

Oft in these moments such a holy calm
Would overspread my soul that bodily eyes
Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw
Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
A prospect in the mind.⁵⁶

Wordsworth repeats this in his introductory note to the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality": "I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from but inherent in my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality." The last sentence is very significant. It is this reluctance to commit himself whole-heartedly to his mystic experiences, this constant effort to return to sensory and rational reality, which was to prove the bane of Wordsworth's poetry. As he grew older, the dependence on reason increased, the intellectuality gradually obfuscated his intuitive mystic vision more and more till the 'visionary gleam' died away in a desert of moralising and dry, sterile ideas.

The third stage reached through the Unifying vision is to see the One not just as the essence of many, as in the first stage, but also as the great supporting principle of the universe. The many are its various

facets while it remains the eternal unchanging foundation : "I am here in this world and everywhere, I support this entire universe", says the *Gita*, X. 42. Or, as the *Isa Upanishad* says at the very beginning "The world is a garment, or dwelling-place, for the informing and governing Spirit." Wordsworth describes it as :

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe I
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion...⁵⁷

What is interesting about Wordsworth, however, is that, unlike Sankaracharya, he did not proceed from this step to the final negative stage of asserting that the One cannot be the many, and that hence all creation is *maya*, an illusion. It is Wordsworth's great contribution that he reconciles the spiritual and the sensory worlds. It is through the mighty world of eye and ear—the light of setting suns, the round ocean, the living air, the blue sky and the mind of man—that he contacts the Divine Reality, not independently of them. He is, like his own skylark, "True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home". Though he never soars, like Shelley, out of touch with the sensory world, he does not make the mistake of limiting his concept of reality purely to that which the senses and intellect apprehend. It is this admirable sense of balance which makes him so relevant to all times, and so akin to an Oriental seer like Sri Aurobindo who does not believe in an ascetic withdrawal from the world, but aims at divinising this human life.

In the world of today we find the West getting more and more disillusioned with purely materialistic existence, searching blindly for something beyond the sense-world which will give meaning, give some sense of order to the welter of chaos which is life. I quote from a recent article by a contemporary American journalist : "The '70s are seeing the American launched on a curiously un-American quest. He has order—the order of the machine and the punch card, the order he once thought he wanted—and he is sick to death of all the well-oiled predestination. He is off and hunting for a richer order than technology can provide, a more organic sense of meaning. Confusedly, belatedly, he is searching for something very like his soul."⁵⁸ Paradoxically, an inordinate stress on what is external has brought about a recoil and disgust for it. Again, in its wide and eager curiosity, the modern age has neglected the inner movement which leads to what lies behind the material reality, and is consequently marred by a superficial, and at best, a sophisticated intellection. A peculiar aridity seems to permeate the

modern consciousness : the *joie de vivre*, that which made life fresh, green and happy, seems to be lost. "Cut away from the soul, from the central fount of its being, the human consciousness has been, as it were, desiccated and pulverized ; it has been thrown wholly upon its multifarious external movements and bears the appearance of a thirsty shifting expanse of desert sands."⁵⁹ In the phenomenon of the "flower-people" we see an effort to recapture man's pristine intimate contact with nature, without which he has become a bundle of nerves and frustrations, harassed (as Wordsworth was long back) by the incessant din and tension of a technological civilization. The Western youth searches for a way out with the help of drugs, trying to forget the body and the mind in a world of hallucinatory visions, which only leave behind an intense depression and a vital craving for more sensation, without giving anything permanent to hold on to. What, then, is the solution ? The only lasting remedy, as our ancient philosopher-seers well knew, can come from within us. As Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta writes in his profound essay, "The Malady of the Century" : "To relieve life of this mingled strain and tension, to lift it out of this ambiguity and uncertainty, to free it from this gravitational force that drives it towards what is superficial and external—to endow it with its real worth, we must find and possess life at a higher level, at its unspoilt source ; we must first draw back and re-establish, this time consciously and integrally, the lost connection with our soul, the Divine in our being". ^{59a}

And the great Indian seer says the same things :

The outward and the immediate are our field,
 The dead past is our background and support ;
 Mind keeps the soul prisoner, we are slaves to our acts ;
 We cannot free our gaze to reach wisdom's sun ..
 Absorbed in a routine of daily acts,
 Our eyes are fixed on an external scene...
 Thus is the meaning of creation veiled ;
 For without context reads the cosmic page :
 Its signs stare at us like an unknown script...
 It wears to the perishable creature's eyes
 The grandeur of a useless miracle ..
 Yet a foreseeing knowledge might be ours,
 If we could take our spirit's stand within,
 If we could hear the muffled daemon voice...
 We must fill the immense lacuna we have made,
 Re-wed the closed finite's lonely consonant
 With the open vowels of Infinity,

**A hyphen must connect Matter and Mind,
The narrow isthmus of the ascending soul.⁶⁰**

Wordsworth, in his own way, brings to the West this mystic message of the East, backing up ancient truths with the validity of his personal experiences : once the soul knows itself, it establishes a state of bliss which nothing can destroy.⁶¹ Wordsworth has shown that this contact with the soul can be achieved through the means of constant receptivity to the beauty and grandeur of natural scenery, which can induce mystic trances in which one comprehends :

truths that wake

To perish never :

Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,

(which plague the modern age)

Nor Man nor Boy,

Nor all that is at enmity with joy,

Can utterly abolish or destroy I 63

In this union of Nature's soul and Man's mind and the Spirit which has its dwelling in the light of setting suns and in the mind of man, there is solace even for the acute existentialist *angst* of modern times. The solution offered by Wordsworth the *kavi* does not depend on external means, but on an inner change. It is a concept re-iterated innumerable times in Hindu philosophy and reasserted memorably in our own age by Sri Aurobindo. And it is because of his concrete spiritual experiences that Wordsworth can state so confidently his firm belief that the man

Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
Of nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves such objects as excite
No morbid passions, and no hatred—needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
Accordingly he by degrees perceives
His feelings of aversion softened down ;
A holy tenderness pervade his frame...

he looks round

And seeks for good ; and finds the good he seeks :

Until abhorrence and contempt are things

He only knows by name...

and has no thought,

No feeling, which can overcome his love...

That change shall clothe

The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore

The burthen of existence...

So build we up the Being that we are ;

Thus deeply drinking-in the soul of things,

We shall be wise perforce...

Whate'er we see,

Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine ;

Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,

Earthly desires ; and raise, to loftier heights

Of divine love, our intellectual soul.⁶⁸

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THE TRAGIC ESSENCE OF SAINT JOAN

BEDASRUTI DAS

The tragedy of Shaw's Joan is not the tragedy of a saint but a genius, a country maid of exceptional intellectual vivacity and powerful intuitions. The basic fallacy of the critics lies in their apparent consideration of Joan as a saint, whose ideas come from a divine agent, namely God. It is for this reason Mr. Martz is reluctant to judge the play by Aristotelian principles (as a saint's death on an elevated plane is a spiritual victory over the material world and hence not tragic) and finds an altogether different kind of tragic experience in the play 'accepting Joan as a saint'. To see these plays (*Saint Joan* and *Murder in the Cathedral*) as in any sense tragic it seems that *we must abandon the concept of a play built upon an ideal Aristotelian hero, and look instead for a tragic experience that arise from the interaction between a hero who represents the secret cause, and the other characters who represent the human sufferers*'. But Shaw's Joan is essentially a human character. She is a genius, whose ideas come from *within*. She fully satisfies the chief requisites of an Aristotelian hero. *Hubris* or pride (It is the chastisement of *hubris* as the Archbishop puts it), merged in extreme self-confidence, is the tragic flaw or *Hamartia* of Joan's character. The main purpose of the article is to explore the truth that the tragedy of Joan occurs on a human level rather than on any heightened plane of saints.

Joan is essentially conceived by Shaw as a genius. Shaw, in the Preface, defines a genius in the following words : "A genius is a person who, seeing further and probing deeper than other people, has a different set of ethical valuations from theirs, and has energy enough to give effect to this extra vision and its valuations in whatever manner best suits his or her specific talents". Her genius cultivated mainly in masculine departments, particularly in 'soldiering and politics'. With a mild satire on the present day educated women, Shaw esteems Joan in high praise. "She understood the political and military situation in France much better than most of our newspaper-fed university women-graduates understand the corresponding situation of their own country today". With this sharp untutored intellect of a genius, Joan possesses a vivid imagination which leads to a serious misunderstanding as regards

the source of her mature, fruitful ideas. Shaw writes, "There are people in the world whose imagination is so vivid that when they have an idea it comes to them as an audible voice, sometimes uttered by a visible figure." Joan mistakenly conceived her ideas to have come from some divine agents. But Shaw considers these 'inspirations and intuitions' as unconsciously reasoned conclusions of genius, whereas, these came to Joan as 'an instruction from her counsel, as she called her visionary saints: but she was nonetheless an able leader of men for imagining ideas in this way.' This unawareness of her self (and the misunderstanding due to it) is, in fact, the cause of her tragic end. Truly, *The tragedy of Joan emerges out of the sharp juxtaposition of illusion and reality; what Joan thought herself to be and what she really was*. The cause lies *within* Joan. Joan's burning as a heretic rests primarily on the consideration of her illusory visions (which she deliberately defends as true) to be false. Even the act of canonization, the compensation of the fault that caused her tragic end, remains within the spell of this illusions; the church pays due homage to Joan the saint (considering her visions to be true) and not to Joan the genius. "A saint is one who having practised heroic virtues, and enjoyed revelations or powers of the order which the church classes technically as supernatural, is eligible for canonization", writes Shaw in his 'preface. But the fact that 'the voices and the visions are illusory and *their wisdom all Joan's own* is shown by the occasions on which they failed her, notably during her trial, when they assured her that she would be rescued'. Why Joan is affected by such an illusion is an important issue at present. In fact, Joan's intellectual potentialities were too great to be explained in the simple background of ignorant villagers. Even Joan herself could not possibly go beyond the limitation of such a background; she failed to recognize her real being. Hence a villager's deep-rooted, blind faith in God makes her believe in her voices or vision. This is the simple way she tried to explain her situation.

II

Initially, Joan appears to be a girl of vital energy, tempered by her sweet and persuasive nature. It is not so much by her apparently miraculous power that she wins the hearts of Robert de Baudricourt and his men, but her natural affection is of greater influence. She loves others and is thereby loved by them. Her fruitful intuitive speculations and extreme self-confidence clearly convince them of her potentialities. She triumphs. Robert offers her the necessary aids she expected from him.

With a note of introduction from Robert, she is received in the French court by Charles, even against the violent opposition raised by the Archbishop and others. But she persuades the Archbishop not by asserting herself as the messenger of God but by paying undeserved respect to him. With humble submission she pleads, "*My Lord : I am only a poor country girl ; and you are filled with the blessedness and glory of God Himself ; but you will touch me with your hands, and give me your blessing, wont you ?*" The Archbishop is so much touched by her words that he sensitively yields to her defence, as he misunderstands the court's smile to be a mockery against Joan.

"Gentlemen ! your levity is rebuked by this maid's faith, I am God help me, all unworthy ; but your mirth is a deadly sin".

That Joan could not rise above human stature becomes evident in her surprised gesture to the fashionable Duchess ; "Joan. Be that Queen ?

Charles. No. She thinks she is. "

Joan. (again staring after the Duchess. Oo-oo-oh I,

(Her awe-struck amazement at the figure cut by the magnificently dressed lady is not wholly complimentary.)"

The miraculous power of Joan is of negligible importance to Charles ("I dont want a message"); Joan could impress Charles only with the assurance of his confirmed right on the land as a king ! "Charles ; I come from the land, and have gotten my strength working on the land ; and I tell thee that the land is thine to rule righteously—".

Joan's militant spirit gains its full-fledged exposition in her besieging of Orleans. Comparing Joan with Lawrence of Arabia, Ruth Adam writes, "Like Lawrence, Joan united a scattered and demoralized nation to turn the occupying invaders out of their country"¹. Her masculine quality of leadership fascinatingly draws Dunois' admiration. Dunois is far less interested in her as 'a servant of God' than as an able soldier ; he is moved when Joan says, "I will never take a husband. A man in Toul took an action against me for breach of promise ; but I never promised him. I am a soldier : I do not want to be thought of as a woman. I will not dress as a woman. I do not care for the things women care for. They dream of lovers and of money. I dream of leading a charge, and of placing the big guns. You soldiers do not know how to use the big guns : you think you can win battles with a great noise and smoke".

Audrey Williamson almost approaches the truth when he writes that 'one was conscious without question of a girl (Joan) with the physical resources of a born soldier and campaigner, plus the mental qualities of that make for the strategist and general of original genius. Her mind

struck fire out of the play, like metal against a tinder ; and the fire was not only the *saint's fire* but the burning zeal of a human being a little in love—as Dunois says of her—with war. A picture of Joan without either facet the mystic and the soldier can never be a true one's. It is in fact, not the saint's fire received from any external agent but the fiery spirit of an original genius, with new and revolutionary ideas born *within* her, that is recognizable in Joan's character.

So far, we see that Joan's militant spirit and the sweet tongue of persuasiveness are more operative than her power of miracles (as others deduce from her words).

III

The novelty in Joan's humanitarian ideas shatters the then existing order in society ; they particularly meet in direct clash with the feudal system and the Church principles. Mr. Homer E. Woodbridge clearly states Joan's situation : "To Stogumber Joan is a witch, because she has beaten the English ; to Warwick she must be destroyed because she has appealed directly to kings over the heads of the great nobles ; to Cauchon she is a dangerous heretic whose cult threatens the very life of the Church"⁴. There lies manifold interest, in reducing Joan's stature to mere heretic. Leaving all responsibilities to the Church others deliberately try to hide their cruel and selfish intentions.

With the lapse of time the situation changes. The sweet, persuasive tongue of Joan has now grown more assertive ; she has become more demanding and dominating. Their individuality being shattered, people, though sympathetic toward Joan, turn hostile to her and, in fact, she finds none to defend her in the coronation scene,

She shares a tragic hero's weakness of *pride* and extreme self-confidence :

"The Archbishop. Pride will have a fall, Joan. i

Joan. Oh, never mind whether it is pride or not: is it true? Is it commonsense?"

With this attitude she offends everyone in the Court : Dunois is irritated by Joan's ridiculous undermining of his credit as a soldier in besieging Orleans ; she rouses the Archbishop's fury by asserting her superiority in regard to her closer communication with God ; Charles is displeased as Joan pays no regard to her kingly authority.

Joan, at this phase, clearly appears to be an Aristotelian hero with the tragic flaw of pride and she is virtually caught in human situations.

IV

In the trial scene, Joan is more explicitly discovered in her natural human instincts ; pride, fear, a sense of superiority are there in her character. We find momentary flash of a petty and girlish affectation in Joan's idea of moving in society like a lady : "Nay. I am no shepherd lass, though I have helped with the sheep like anyone else. I will do a lady's work in the house—spin or weave against any woman in Rouen".

But, her dominating spirit of a soldier discards the proposition to live a feathery life like this :

"The Chaplain. If you are so clever at woman's work why do you not stay at home and do it ?

Joan. There are plenty of other women to do it ; but there is nobody to do my work".

A stubborn egoistic note is easily recognizable. Unlike a saint giving in the will of God, Joan seeks to rely absolutely on her own judgement : "What other judgement can I judge by but my own ?"

Joan sometimes reveals simple truths in a simple manner ; for instance, when the inquisitor, referring to the scriptures, says, "The simplicity of a darkened mind is no better than the simplicity of a beast" she wisely replies, "There is great wisdom in the simplicity of a beast, let me tell you ; and sometimes great foolishness in the wisdom of scholars." The suggestive undertones in Joan's words rightly establishes her own case ; the wisdom of Joan is not the result of serious scholastic studies—it comes from *Within*. No external power or force acts on Joan to embody her wisdom ; it is all her natural genius. But, till the first part of the scene, she is under the spell of an illusion to believe that her wisdom comes to her in the form of voices or visions and is unusually assertive of it.

However, the illusion breaks and the real Joan is exposed when the voices failed to save her from mortal punishment : "Joan (despairingly). Oh, it is true, it is true : *my voices have deceived me*. I have been mocked by devils : my faith is broken."

From now onwards Joan appears to be more herself than before. No longer is her character confused by such a vague and incomprehensible idea as voices or visions. She is mortally *afraid* of being burnt alive and is thus ready to sign the form of recantation with the expectation of her freedom. This acceptance of human justice shows Joan in her human limitations. Further, the *romantic Joan's love for free-life makes her pathetically* (as she can never have it) *human* : "I could do without my warhouse ; I could drag about in a skirt ; I could let the banners and the trumpets and the knights and soldiers pass me

and leave me behind as they *leave* the other women, *if only I could still hear the wind in the trees, the larks in the sunshine*, the young lambs crying through the healthy frost, and the blessed church bells that send my angel voices floating to me on the wind. But without these things I cannot live ; and by your wanting to take them away from me, or from any human creature, I know that your counsel is of the devil and that mine is of God."

But she is denied of her desired freedom. What she said and did in the past is such a guilt to the Church authority that with a confession she may be excused of a death-sentence, but she cannot escape life-imprisonment. Joan's militant spirit revolts. She is not in the least inclined to lead the degraded life of a prisoner. Life seems to her meaningless without its *infinite varieties*. She snatches up the form of recantation and tears it into fragments. To most readers it may sound ridiculous, when she hysterically declares her voices as true. This taking back of the signed recantation rests more on a *personal cause* than on any superior *humanitarian cause*, which is quite contrary to situation of any *saint*. However, the result is her death ; she is burnt alive as a heretic.

Apparently the Epilogue of *Saint Joan* may seem to be a simple comic presentation of the play's whole cast, diminishing the tragic intensity of the play ; but by a more deeply penetrating study of its we recognise a solemn tragic touch in it. In the Epilogue, in fact, Joan's tragedy epitomizes the possible tragic suffering and tragic doom awaiting any genius in this narrow, selfish world of hostilities. The rehabilitation of Joan as a saint is not altogether complimentary to her. It is far less genuinely compensatory to the injustice done to Joan, as it basically rests on political motivation ; by establishing Joan as a saint. Charles confirms his legitimate claim to the royal throne. The tragic essence still whirls round Joan's memories. Whatever might have been the dramatist's symbolic implication, one can hardly ignore the essence of a personal tragedy Joan's tragedy. Charles, indeed, clearly understood the tragic situation of a genius who is socially misfit : "She was like nobody else : and she must take care of herself wherever she is ; for I cannot take care of her ; and neither can you, whatever you may think : you are not big enough. But I will tell you this about her. If you could bring her back to life, they would burn her again within six months, for all their present adoration of her (Epilogue)." The Epilogue, truly, universalizes Joan's tragedy.

V

Though forces of different social institutions are operative to bring the tragic end of Joan (her reactionary ideas attack them individually), yet the fatal blow comes to Joan *within* the Church. The church labels the charge against Joan and was prepared to spare Joan's life with a confession of her guilt. Joan's illusion that she received voices from God and her deliberate assertion of it is, indeed, the cause of her tragic doom. If she had realised that the inspirations and the wisdom were all her own, her situation would be different; at least, she would not die so tragically within the Church premises. The tragedy of Joan solely emerges from her illusion regarding self or the unawareness of her real being.

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RECENT TENDENCIES IN FICTIONAL THEORY *

AMITABHA SINHA

In the past two decades, there have been some attempts at a theoretical revaluation of the nature and function of prose fiction : my intention is to show how these bring forward a new aesthetic of the novel, while stressing its individuality as a genre. These recent tendencies, however, do not radically break away from the preceding tradition of novelistic theory and criticism, but seek to modify it in certain respects. Therefore, before discussing the recent theories it is appropriate to make a brief revisit to this theoretical continuum to which they belong—since, however, the aim of this essay is interpretative, not bibliographical, I shall make a selective survey of only the watersheds, as it were.

The tradition that precedes the recent theories can be called the modern or avant-garde tradition ; this, starting about the twenties as a development of its well-known notions of Henry James, is noted for its emphasis on the form and technique of the novel—something which was not seen in the nineteenth century concern with plot, character, delight in descriptions, and the attitude to life of the novelists.¹ The emphasis, bringing out the organic role of articulation in fiction, is best summed up in such phrases as in Percy Lubbock's view of the "single form" of the novel as an image of life not as an argument or statement of facts (The Craft of Fiction, London, reprint, 1961, p. 25), or in Mark Schorer's view of the supreme instance of form as *achieved* content ("Technique as Discovery", *Forms of Modern Fiction*, Minneapolis, 1948, pp. 15-6). Under this blanket description, however, "modern" theorization is characterized by some concrete aspects which, familiar as they are, require a second glance in the present context.

Of these precursors of recent theories, the first to be mentioned is the fashionable but fascinating concern with point of view or narrative technique. Once more we must back to Lubbock—it is difficult to bypass him in any discussion of the theory of the novel. Lubbock's well-

* Based on a paper read at the meeting of The Study Circle, Calcutta, on 17.5.70.

known clichés (deriving from James and others) centre round his initial position : "The whole intricate question of method in the craft of fiction.....the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to his story" (*op. cit.*, p. 251.) This relationship or point of view may be the author's, the character's, or of the character's consciousness, producing diverse effects such as panorama, summary, scene and drama. According to Lubbock, the omniscient author convention is undesirable, and the point of view of an individual consciousness, through which the action is to be rendered as drama, is the proper narrative medium. This theoretical attitude of Lubbock is confirmed by J. W. Beach who, having first sketched his ideas in *The Method of Henry James* (1918), propounded them in *The Twentieth Century Novel* (New York, 1932.) He characterized the change in technique in modern fiction with his slogan of "Exit Author", extolling the virtue of point of view, whereby "the story shall tell itself, being conducted through the impressions of the character", (p. 16.) Obviously, Beach discards old fiction which is marred by the intrusion of the omniscient author or "Philosopher". The attitude towards the "point of view" as part of the notion of a tight economy in narration finds its culmination in the essay, "Point of View in Fiction" (*PMLA*, XX, 1955) by Norman Friedman, a major exponent of the Lubbock-Beach school. After upholding the individual point of view, Friedman asserts that omniscience is an "untutored" and lazy approach to narration (p. 1169.) Doubtless, such theorists have brought in essential concepts to fiction-criticism. Yet their "two chief characteristics the emphasis, on the individual point of view and the criticism of omniscient narration, seem to be biased and unjust."

The Second and the third tendencies of modern theorization derive from the influence of New criticism, under which critics seek to apply the principles and tools of poetry-criticism to fiction-criticism. There is in the first place the view of the structural form of novels as an autonomous artefact distinct from, and unconnected to life, which is to be seen only in terms of internal consistency—this improves on the general notions of form which I have touched upon before. Thus, Mark Schorer, in another context than mentioned before, develops Lubbock's general idea, by saying, "a novel is not life but an image of life, an author's selective interpretation concretely embodied" (Foreword to *Critiques and Essays in Modern Fiction*, ed. J. W. Aldridge, New York, 1953, p. xvi.) The climax to such theories is seen in R.W. Stallman : "Art siphons the stream of temporal sensuous experience—into pools of formed experience" Stallman evokes the interesting metaphor of an aquarium for fictional form : the characters in a novel, he says, are like fish in the

aquarium, while the characters in real life are like fish in the stream. Stallman argues that the life-likeness of the aquarium-fish is not the same as that of "stream-of-life" fish; being aquarium fish, they conform to the logic of the aquarium world (e.g. the coral, the greenery, the currents) and the glasswork "deceives us into thinking that the two species are identical" (Life, Art, and *The Secret Sharer*, *Forms of Modern Fiction*, p. 235.) The imitation of life in a novel is thus reduced to an illusion, produced by the skill of form.

Next, there is the theory of language as an essential vehicle of articulation. Thus, Mark Schorer in another well-known essay, holds that, since fiction is a literary art, "It must begin with the word" and with "figurative structures, with rhetoric as skeleton and style as body of meaning" ("Fiction and the 'Analogical Matrix'", *Critiques and Essays in Modern Fiction*, p. 83.) More concrete and emphatic is Rickword's view: character is "the pseudo-objective image" composed by the reader "of his response to an author's verbal arrangements", and story, from which character emerges, is "structurally a product of language, eloquence" ("A Note on Fiction", *Forms of Modern Fiction*, pp. 295, 300). This theory of language invariably results in the "close scrutiny of texts", as, for instance, in Allen Tate's emphasis on linguistic manipulation in the rendering of a scene as the true standard of fictional technique, which he illustrates with reference to a selected passage from *Madame Bovary* ("Technique of Fiction", *Forms of Modern Fiction*, pp. 44-5.) Closely allied to the theory of language is the theory of repetitive patterns of images, symbols, and words in the novel. A major instance is Joseph Frank's view of the "cross-referential or spatial" form in the novel... "practically indistinguishable from modern poetry" ("Spatial Form in the Modern Novel", *Critiques and Essays*, pp. 43-66). Similarly, Mark Schorer evolves his view of the "analogical matrix" in fiction, which he describes as the "dominant metaphorical quality—some related traits of diction", and generally, the whole habit of "value-association" ("Fiction and the 'Analogical Matrix'", *Critiques and Essays*, p. 83.)¹

Side by side with these prevalent tendencies of modern theories, there have been certain other attitudes which are outside of the stream. For instance, E.M. Forster's famous but now rather overworked view of "flat" and "round" characters and his suggestive ideas on "pattern" and "rhythm". (*Aspects of the Novel*, 1927.) Nevertheless, Forster's views, to my mind, remain largely impressionistic. Edwin Muir (*The Structure of the Novel*, 1928), also, does not give any real theory as such, although his classification of categories of plot or fable in the

novel are quite useful. Then there is F.R. Leavis (*The Great Tradition*, 1948) who sees the novel in terms of moral intensity with which nobody has any quarrel, but which, as theory, does not appear to be strikingly new (his repeated references to "form" seem rather vague.) Notwithstanding such isolated views, the emphasis till the late fifties has been on the Lubbock-Beach mode and the quasi-New-Critical school—the two complementing and often combining with one another, occasionally supported by such individual fellow-travellers such as E.K. Brown with his notion of rhythmic structure (*Rhythm in the Novel*, 1953.)

This modern theorization of the novel has been a two-edged affair. On the one hand, it has done pioneering work in fiction-criticism. Thus, for instance, it has brought serious attention to the fact that the narrative medium of the novel is one of the necessary components of its form, so that it cannot be analyzed merely in terms of plot and character. Then again, it has brought serious attention to the facts that the novel is a composite whole like any other literary art and its form and content are indivisible. In doing all this, it has supplanted the inadequacies of former criticism and helped raise the status of the novel as a literary genre. On the other hand, it has been somewhat lop-sided in its attitude and has somewhat damaged novel-criticism. Firstly, it has tended to mechanically assert and overemphasize the question of form and technique. This has led to much pattern-hunting and search for a consistent point of view and so forth, ignoring the quality of experience expressed thereby. This defeats their fundamental assumption that form is *achieved* content (after all, part of the business of even formalist criticism should be to give the reader an enlarged view of the contents of a novel.) It is here Stallman's "aquarium"-theory calls for criticism, since it denies that the "aquarium"-fish and the "stream-of-life" fish are identical: what he ignores is that both are "fish", which gives them their sameness. Secondly, such theories, while justly seeing the technical and formal virtues of modern fiction, have usually found the older novels deficient, because these lack in the said virtues. As matter of fact, this is due to the fact that such theoretical attitudes have developed largely as a result of the growth of the modern experimental novel which has approached more and more the condition of poetry and has been concerned with formal experiments.

II

From the late 'fifties and particularly the 'sixties, a fresh school of novelistic theory has sprung (though anticipated before), which

continues the above-mentioned tradition by amending its drawbacks. Such theorists, while recognizing the new principles, have developed a catholic concept of form, and this they apply to the older masters, discovering their distinctive kinds of art. Moreover, they seek to improve on the limited approach to form and technique by taking into account the question of the presentation of life. It is a growing tendency, far from being completed, and I shall confine myself only to those few theorists who to my mind adequately represent it. For my present purpose, I shall concentrate on three of their general features : (1) the theory of narrative technique, (2) the theory of language in fiction, and (3) the elastic concept of novelistic form, with which is associated the attention to the quality of life in a novel.

Firstly, the theory of narrative technique. Here the new theories justify the omniscient author's "voice" held by previous theoreticians to be undesirable. The broad-minded attitude to the question is perhaps first distinctly seen in Geoffrey Tillotson's *Thackeray the Novelist* (Cambridge University Press, 1954.) Here Tillotson counters Lubbockian ideas by showing, with reference to Thackeray, that a "scene" can be panoramically determined (ch. V) and that the "author's voice" can do important narrative functions (ch. IV.) However, Tillotson's book rather implies the standpoint and for more forthright theoretical statements, we should turn our attention elsewhere. Martin Steinmann, Jr. points out the ineradicability of omniscience by saying that "every novelist is omniscient in that, having created a world out of his own imagination, he knows everything about this world—he becomes omniscient.....by what he chooses to tell", for instance, the inner lives of characters ("The Old Novel and the New", in *From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad*, Minneapolis, 1958. p. 290.) It is, I think, the late W. J. Harvey, who first gave a full formulation of the liberal attitude towards narrative technique in his "George Eliot and the Omniscient Author Convention" (*The Art of George Eliot*, ch. 3, London, 1961.) Objecting to the "overtones of dispraise" that are usually associated with the use of the convention, Professor Harvey defends it as a necessary method. It is, he says, not merely a label, which is external to particular novels and which a novelist "may simply adopt or reject" (p. 68.) On the contrary, it "exists in only particular manifestations" through a variety of techniques which, if properly handled, show their importance and function upon analysis (p. 68.) The truth of Harvey's views is self-evident, and can always be tested if we remember some of the novelists we have read (Fielding's patent omniscience, for example, as distinguished from Conrad's functional omniscience in *Lord*

Jim—after all, Conrad *is* omniscient.) The truth is more particularly felt when Professor Harvey subsequently illustrates it, as, for example, by pointing out that omniscience establishes a necessary link between “macrocosm” and “microcosm” in ch. 17 of *Adam Bede* (pp. 69-71.)

The case for omniscience as a necessary technique in fiction is extensively elaborated by Wayne Booth in his classic work, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, (Chicago, 1961.) Ignoring the Lubbockian distinction between “telling” and “showing” the story, Booth denies any possibility of absolutely “impersonal” narration to fiction. For the “author’s voice”, according to him, must always inhere in the novel, even in the most “dramatic” novels; the presence will be seen, if not in anything else, at least in the author’s choice of what he will tell the reader (ch. I; here Booth explicitly echoes Steinmann.) The “author’s voice”, therefore, is not necessarily a fault. Having made this point—which I feel to be basically sound—, Booth brings in the question of “dramatized” narration whereby he shows that the author’s free exercise of his rights is an impossibility. For there is in every novel an “implied author”, the novelist’s “second self” whom he *creates* as he writes, whether in omniscient or indirect narration (e.g. pp., 156-58.) I think this to be very important point, for this helps us see that the idea of omniscience is some kind of a myth, the “omniscient author” himself being a projected image of the author behind the book, not necessarily sharing the values believed in by the historical author and knowing only as much as has been selected for the purpose of story-telling. One of Booth’s special theoretical achievements is his remodelling of the distinction between Omniscient and impersonal narrators as the distinction between reliable and unreliable narrators. Booth places the functions of the former under the name of reliable commentary which includes not merely the usual authorial commentary but also panoramas. There is no space here to dwell on Booth’s rich tabulation of these functions, it directly illustrating the “particular manifestations” of omniscience, referred to by Harvey. What is important is that Booth does not merely give a mechanical array of methods but shows that how these are persuasive, technical tools in the author’s hands for gaining his desired ends (this is largely what stands behind Booth’s concept of fiction as a rhetorical art.) Two of the host of functions that Booth discovers in authorial commentary may be mentioned here. For example, he indicates a very important but scarcely noticed function of summary, namely, irony, which cannot exist “unless the author and audience can somehow share knowledge which the characters do not hold” (much of the pleasure for example, of reading *Tom Jones* would have been

lost, he justly points out, if there had been no author's voice to remind that the situation for Tom is not always as hopeless as it appears, pp.175-76.) Then again, there are certain intricate judgements on characters which, Booth argues, cannot be inferred merely from their actions and speech and which require authorial telling (as an example, he cites Conrad's analysis of Dr. Monygham in *Nostromo*, p.189.) I fully agree with the above postulates which can be summed up as : (1) omniscience is ineradicable, (2) the author's "I" is itself a fiction, and when properly handled, contributes to rather than detracts from the fictional illusion, (3) it is not a blanket-term, but consists in various concrete techniques. No doubt, by thus broadening the concept of narrative technique these theoretical attitudes balance the undue Lubbockian emphasis on the character's point of view.

Next, the theory of novelistic language, firstly with reference to the work of one theorist, David Lodge (*The Language of Fiction*, London, 1966.) Lodge's central proposition that the novel is a verbal pattern—whatever a novelist does, he does so through words language—is not a new attitude: the theory and practice under the influence of New Criticism which I have discussed before (e.g. Rickword, Schorer) testifies to that. But Lodge claims novelty on two grounds. Firstly, he shows a liberal attitude by seeking to modify some of the tendencies of New Criticism in this respect, with an awareness that criticism is "human discourse" (p. 87). For instance, he counters Rickword's view that character as a verbal arrangement is liable to be criticized from irrelevant angles of moral, political, social or religious significance, by pointing out that "these angles are not necessarily as irrelevant" (p. 73). Secondly, aware that the theory of the novel as a verbal art is easy to apply to modern novelists who are deliberate experimenters with language, Lodge cancels any implication that older novelists are deficient in this matter and includes them in his theory (p. 30.)

Yet, Lodge, it seems, places an emphasis on the formalistic role of language, which somewhat contradicts his own position. This is seen in such statements as "the activity of returning the work of art to the continuum of actuality is made treacherously easy in the novel" (p. 72.) I do not agree with this, for, I think that this activity is, on the contrary, rather difficult (unless, of course, one adopts a native attitude of equating the novel with life.) Lodge's drawback is also seen in his concept of plot as verbal arrangement: "the synthesizing principle of all literary structures is language: *all plots are plots of language* (p. 74, italics mine.) To such questions that arise relevantly in one's mind, "can a plot exist prior to language?" and "can plot, put in a different

language, say, of another author's, give pleasure?" Lodge seems to say "no". Yet, Lodge's inadequacy remains evident; for, granted the unique language in which the plot finds form (that is, not as summary), it is surely true that the intellectual and aesthetic pleasure we derive from a plot depends largely on our memory of the logical and symmetrical arrangement of events, independent of the language in which it had been formed. Marvin Mudrick, to whom Lodge refers, gives a wiser view on the subject ("Character and Event in Fiction", *Critical Approaches to Fiction*, ed. Shiv K. Kumar and Keith McKean, 1968.) While he is aware that "words are the only visible structure of the fictional event" (p. 101), he clearly distinguishes between the role of language in "verse fiction". In the former the emphasis is strongly on words which must be precise and special to establish the individual and poignant singularity of the action (which is likely to be typical and general)—these are Mudrick's words. In prose fiction, Mudrick says, "the unit is the event", highly detailed and circumstantial, and therefore its language need not be so precise and special. Mudrick is also right when he says that the dependence of fiction on language is a slippery and equivocal issue. Thus, great fiction survives not only translation but a recognizable amount of bad and dull writing even in an original text. Other improvements on Lodge are found in the brief points made by Steinmann Jr. and W.J. Harvey. Steinmann Jr. aptly points out that, although we get at fictional structure through language, "structure has some measure of independence; for two works can have roughly the same structure but quite different styles; he suggests Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the one by the Lambs as a typical example (op. cit., p. 293) Professor Harvey's attitude (*Character and the Novel*, 1965, p. 209) is more emancipated. According to him, the general principle of the work of art as an organised pattern of language is a truism not fully applicable to the novel, because of all art-forms, "the novel depends least upon its verbal medium" and "the novel loses least of all in translation", for the response to translation, as to "plot", is not solely dependent on language (this, along with Mudrick's view, answers Lodge's idea of the untranslatable uniqueness of a novel.) I am fully in accord with the implication of these views that the equation of fictional form with language is erratic. For, while language is no doubt the essential gateway to the understanding of fiction, it is *only one* of the structural components of a novel; it inheres in the presentation of a point of view, time, or rhythm, and is combined with other elements (for example, the quality of a character's mind, or an event.) Moreover, the language of fiction is not consistently on the high pitch of poetic language.

Finally, the most important theory—that of the “form” of the novel, to which is allied the question of the novel’s relationship with life. Recent theories discard the concept of a concentrated, self-complete form, as this, according to them, is incompatible with the nature of the novel which has to deal with so much amorphous material of life. Thus, for instance, Barbara Hardy (*The Appropriate Form*, London, 1964) objects to the Jamesian notion of an aesthetic form of a highly concentrated unity as something, which if too rigidly pursued, would end by damaging the vitality of the novel. What may be thematically and aesthetically satisfactory, she says, may be “humanly unsupported” (as an example, she cites the rejection of Maria Gostrey in *The Ambassadors* pp. 5-6.) While I fully agree with this view, her own ideas of form require a more critical scrutiny. She divides “narrative form” into three categories (1) the form of the story or the “narrative curve of tension”, (2) the form or organization of the criticism of life which she also calls “argument”, and (3) the form which expresses the “individual moment” and the individual life, which she also describes as “imitation” the “form of truth”. While these views are no doubt theoretically sound and eminently acceptable, they also seem to be somewhat inadequate. Everybody knows that a novel must give a story, a criticism of life, and an imitation of life. But the questions remain : do these represent the forms themselves (which is not ruled out by her discussion) ? or, do these *have forms* of their own—if so, what are these forms ? She is not clear on these points. However, Mrs. Hardy is very clear on another, and more important issue. She points out that in order to give unity and organization to the novel, these elements need to inhere in or combine with some kind of catholic aesthetic form capable of accommodating the “redundancies” and “vitality” of the novel, especially of older novels. This is clear in her view that the response to fiction depends on “characters and language acting in the interest of local vitality as well as in the interest of overriding theme” (p. 84). This is also clear from her subsequent criticism of novelists and novels. For instance, she shows in her discussion of George Meredith’s *Harry Richmond*, how the image and symbol-pattern in the novel represents a combination of the main thematic stream and a “casual and wayward richness” (pp. 83-104) ; again, with reference to *Middlemarch*, she proves that the demand for unity and the demand for truth” are inseparable (p. 131.) On the whole, she holds a very welcome attitude in her repeated insistence on “local vitality” of truthful representation in the novel, and in her conditioning, and being conditioned by unity, or better, “completeness” of form.

W. J. Harvey (*Character and the Novel*) makes a more elaborate theorization about this question of balance between an aesthetic form and the quality of life portrayed in a novel. Harvey develops his theory from his initial distinction between two theories which he applies to the form of the novel, the "autonomy theory" which is concerned with the inner consistency of the work (the H. C. F. of Lubbockian-cum-New Critical ideas), and the "theory of mimesis" which derives from the "root proposition", "Art Imitates Nature" (pp. 11-3.) While he holds his brief for the mimesis theory, Harvey's is no simple theory equating the novel with life. First, he introduces the notion of the "angle of mimesis". The "normal" work like *Middlemarch*, he says, has a narrow mimetic angle, being very nearly parallel to life itself—reading which one feels "life is like this"; a work of fantasy like *Alice in Wonderland* is at right-angles "to life", reading which one feels, "let us pretend life is like this"; in between these two categories lies the entire range of prose fiction, which may be described as a "mimetic arc" (p. 16.) thus, mimesis in the novel is subject to a pattern, and is not a static idea. Having made this valuable, plastic notion of mimesis, which counters any naive idea that the novel mechanically imitates life, Harvey rounds off his initial proposition by stating that experience in the novel may be seen in terms of texture, that is, the texture of our lives, and structure, which organizes texture. This structuring is done by means of what he calls, borrowing a phrase from Kant, "constitutive categories"—there being four such categories, Time, Identity, Causality, Freedom. Since "only in terms of structure the texture of life makes any sense", Harvey states that a mimetic theory of the novel is possible in terms of the structure of experience (pp. 21-4.) An eminently suitable point, to my mind, since it attempts to accommodate the representation of life to formal organization.

I do not have the scope here to give a full account of all Harvey's detailed theories with their complex philosophical overtones. (For example, his idea of the four "constitutive categories" is a sophisticated re-valuation of the structural properties of the novel, requiring close examination—which is beyond the present compass.) I think that his theory claims attention for the following wise and sane attitudes. Firstly, this theory, as he himself says, tolerates the "loose ends and muddle"—"a part of all experience" (p.184.) Therefore the theory assets the obvious but very seldom recognized fact of the "surplus margin of gratuitous life, a sheer excess of material", "energy, variety, abundance", as a characteristic of great novels (p.188), which modern criticism has largely ignored. Secondly, he gives a very relevant warning against

concentrated formal precision, echoing Barbara Hardy, by pointing out that the danger is that "unity may be bought at the cost of too much" (p 185.) Moreover, the characters must not be too conscious of formal patterns which the reader is supposed to infer, nor should the reader himself be too conscious of the patterns—these should remain submerged under the dense masses of experience in a novel (p.186) ; a wise precaution against image and symbol-hunting and a guide to discovering the proper artistic handling of patterns.) Finally, the unique feature of his theory consists in its reconciliation of a sense of the "formlessness of life" which he so much harps upon to the "discipline of art" (through the constitutive categories and the contextual determinants of character), a balance which was never achieved by criticism.

III

To sum up, all these recent theories, whether of narrative technique, or language, or form, issue forth from a liberal imagination. They clearly bring out the autonomous features of the novel, namely, the expansiveness of event, of character, of authorial vitality, in short, what Christopher Caudwell meant by the "stuff" of the novel (*Illusion and Reality*, Bombay, 1947, p.168.) At the same time, by subjecting these expansive materials to notions of formal and artistic articulation (not indulging them for their own sake), they do indeed mark the beginnings of a new theory of fiction, distinguishing it from other literary arts. There are, however, only the beginnings, and I would like to conclude by asking some questions. Firstly, these theories are largely concerned with older, especially nineteenth century fiction, which more than the twentieth-century novel, answers to the concept of novels bulging with life. Now, while it has been found possible to apply enlarged modern concepts to these older novels, will it ever be possible to form a still enlarged vision of the novel, which will be applicable to modern novels as well --equally discovering new values, skill and meanings in them, as in older fiction ? (My answer is yes, e.g., a consideration of omniscience in Henry James or Joyce.) Secondly, will it ever be possible to evolve a *full and complete* theory of fiction ? (Harvey himself admits that his theory, the most complete possible, is tentative.) To my mind, theoretical approaches to the novel—perhaps because of its very elastic nature—will always be left with a margin of possible alterations : They will depend firstly on the type of novel one is dealing with and then on the particular preferences of the critic himself.⁸

NOTES

1. I am aware of attempts made to show the anticipation of "modern" ideas in fictional theory in the nineteenth century, as in Richard Stang's *The Theory of the Novel in England, 1850-1870*, London, 1961, and Kenneth Graham's *English Criticism of the Novel, 1865-1900*, Oxford, 1965. However, such anticipations, for one thing highly fragmentary, did not leave any impact on contemporary fiction-criticism, which is where they differ from twentieth century concepts.
2. Of these, the views especially of Frank, and also of E. K. Brown—whom I have later referred to—are related to the question of structure, one of the issues the scope of this essay does not allow me to touch on. For this reason I do no more than mention them.
3. I have necessarily left out of the discussion such works as Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending*, O. U. P., 1967, or the still later book by Bernard Bragonzi, *The Situation of the Novel*, London, 1970. To my mind, Kermode, making an interesting exploration of the philosophical, anthropomorphic, and literary relationship between structure and sense in the novel, does not give any new theory as such. Bragonzi extends the new, recent theories that I have been discussing.

A MINOR RIDDLE IN SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

SUNIL KANTI SEN

In the first nineteen sonnets of the 1609 edition which form a distinct sequence Shakespeare's main concern appears to be his friend's increase. The doctrine of increase was one of the medieval commonplaces inherited by the Elizabethans. "The which thing (all men know) can never be done without Wedlock, and carnal copulation". (Encomium Matrimonii, Erasmus, translated by Thomas Wilson). In Elizabethan love poetry the argument that celibacy is against the law of nature has been cunningly used by importunate lovers. When Leander says to Hero,

Who builds a palace, and rams up the gate

Shall see it ruinous and desolate.

Ah simple Hero, learn thyself to cherish :

Lone women, like to empty houses, perish.

he is not entirely disinterested.

Venus uses the same argument while wooing Adonis :

Upon the earth's increase why shouldst thou feed,

Unless the earth with thy increase be fed ?

In Shakespeare's sonnets the motivation appears to be different. Whatever his relationship with his friend, clean and warm friendship or pederastic infatuation, the poet's plea that he should marry and beget children appears to express a genuine concern for a fair creature's increase. Behind this plea lies an obsessive fear of 'the bloody tyrant, Time'. In sonnet 12 he says that breed is the only defence against 'Time's scythe'. In sonnet 15 it is suggested for the first time that the poet can mitigate time's ravages by recreating his love in verse. "As he takes from you, I engraft you new". But he argues in sonnet 16 that the mightier way to make war on time is to marry and procreate as neither "Time's pencil" (which means the "painted counterfeit" in line 8) nor his "pupil pen" has the power to defeat time. In sonnet 17 he is still diffident about the death-defying power of his verse but there is a distinct advance in self-confidence. His 'pupil pen' has the potential power to enshrine in immortal verse the beauty and charm of his friend but it would be wiser to marry and beget children instead of relying

exclusively on his rhyme lest 'the age to come' should think it too heavenly to be true. In sonnet 18 he drops the earlier plea for marriage and in superbly controlled verses he defies time and promises eternal summer to his friend. In the next sonnet the tone is more aggressive and the poet defies time's 'antique pen' to taint the undying youth that his 'pupil pen' shall bestow on his love.

Here is a minor riddle. Why should he drop in sonnets 18 and 19 the elaborately argued case for marriage? There is one simple answer. Shakespeare is interested in the immortality of his fair youth who is a paragon of beauty (beauty's rose). In the earlier sonnets the poet makes use of the traditional doctrine of increase through wedlock as he is unsure about the powers of his verse. In sonnet 15 there is the first hint that poetry can in a measure immortalise beauty. Then follows a sudden discovery that the immortality that poetry can bestow is more precious than a fresh print through marriage. I find this answer much too simple to be convincing. I wish to argue that sonnet 20 is the key to this riddle. The boy-woman Hermaphroditus image of the sonnet is a much truer description of the strange infatuation Shakespeare felt for his fair youth and the poet was never seriously interested in his increase. The poet had the instinctive tact to realize that the doctrine of increase can serve different ends in different situations. In a Leander-Hero or Venus-Adonis situation it is an artful device for making love. Where friendship has no sexual overtones, the older friend urging a young and handsome boy to marry and procreate can be a polite form of paying tributes to his beauty. It would be idle to pretend that Shakespeare's relationship with his friend was one of simple friendship and in the first nineteen sonnets the poet is almost afraid to probe the nature of this relationship. Hence he falls back on polite commonplaces. Indeed in these sonnets Shakespeare appears to write under a constraint; the element of playfulness, the use of quibble and double entendre which make some of the later sonnets so rich and multi-layered in meaning are noticeably absent in these sonnets. In these elegant literary exercises the familiar arguments for marriage and breed derive their energy from the poet's real apprehension that time may soon blight 'beauty's rose'. But the pretence of simple friendship is overworked. In sonnet 15 the ground is slightly shifted and there is the first hint that poetry too can defend beauty. In sonnets 16 and 17 it is repeated with some diffidence and in the following two sonnets the theme of marriage is dropped altogether. That poetry can eternalise beauty is not a new discovery made by Shakespeare; it is a literary commonplace which replaces the traditional commonplace of the doctrine of increase. Shakespeare

soon finds both of them inhibiting. With sonnet 20 begins a frank exploration of the tensions and complexities of this strange relationship, and in the legend of Hermaphroditus he discovers a true allegory of his situation.

But since she pricked thee out of women's pleasure

Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

With this daring use of double entendre begins a new sequence of sonnets.

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CORPUS ARISTOTELICUM AND THE POETICS IN ANTIQUITY *

D. K. LAHIRI CHOUDHURY

The object of this paper is to present an account of the career of Aristotle's *Poetics* in Antiquity in relation to the Aristotelian *Corpus* as a whole. In a separate study to be brought out at a later date, it is proposed to review the critical influence the treatise exercised in the period under discussion. By 'Antiquity' is meant the period which, for the present purpose, begins with the 4th century B.C. and ends with the 5th century A.D.

This paper puts no claim to original research, but seeks to present in a coordinated manner the findings of various specialist works on the subject. As no single general work treats the subject under discussion adequately, this article, it is hoped, will prove to be of some use to the non-specialist students of Aristotle with a special interest in the *Poetics*. The method followed here is the same as that followed by the writers of historical surveys.

It is pertinent to begin the story into some important dates in Aristotle's life.¹ Aristotle, the son of a doctor, was born, by the most likely reckoning, in 384 B. C. in the city of Stagira in Thrace.² It is generally agreed that he *probably* entered Plato's Academy in Athens when about seventeen or eighteen and remained there till Plato's death in 348-47; that is, for nearly twenty years; (probably), because it has been questioned in recent times whether Aristotle was actually a member

* This paper was originally presented before a study circle of English scholars in Calcutta in November, 1971. The present writer feels obliged to admit that the gaps in the story here presented are considerable. An Indian scholar working on a Western subject inevitably has to 'make do' with limited and often distressingly meagre resources. This problem, naturally, is more than usually acute in subjects like the one in hand. For example, a number of major works on the subject in general and on Aristotle and the *Poetics* in particular are not available in Calcutta. Some of the more important omissions have been indicated in the notes. The scholarly apparatus provided at the end of the essay is based on materials actually available at the National Library, Calcutta. Apart from pointing out some glaring omissions, it does not pretend to bibliographical comprehensiveness.

of the Academy, or, for that matter, if there was an Academy at all. After Plato's death he, along with Xenocrates,³ went as an invited guest to Hermias, the King of Atarnus and Asses in Mysia.⁴ Hermias had risen from the humble position of a slave, had been once a student of Plato's Academy, and was a personal friend of both. In 343-42 B.C. Aristotle went to Macedon on the invitation of King Philip as the tutor of young Alexander, then thirteen or fourteen years old. In 340 or so he probably left the job when Philip appointed Alexander Regent. It is probable he now retired to Stagira.⁵ In 335 soon after Philip's death he returned to Athens and founded his famous school, the Lyceum. His followers later came to be known as the 'Peripatetics'.⁶ In 323 B.C. Athens became unsafe for people with a Macedonian background, and Aristotle left Athens once again. Thus ended the second and the last Athenian period of Aristotle's life. He left his school to his pupil Theophrastus and went away to Calchis, where he died the next year at the age of 62 or 63. A charming story is told by Gellius of how Aristotle chose his successor.⁷ When the master once fell seriously ill his pupils approached him to nominate his successor. Among his pupils were Theophrastus from Lesbos and Endemus from Rhodes. Aristotle put off making up his mind. Some time later in the presence of his pupils he said that the wine he was drinking did not suit his health and that he would prefer a foreign wine like some from Lesbos or Rhodes. He was supplied with both kinds. Tasting the Rhodian wine he said 'This is truly a sound and pleasant wine'. Next, tasting the wine from Lesbos he said 'Both are very good indeed, but the Lesbian is the sweeter.' Thus tactfully he indicated his preference which was accepted by all.

The history of the *Poetics* in Antiquity is a part of the general history of the transmission of Aristotle's works. The *Poetics* acquired separate history of its own quite late. Thus it is the general aspect of the problem that must be discussed first before getting down to the particularities of the *Poetics*. Our earliest source here is the voluminous *Geography* of Strabo who was born in the latter half of the 1st Century B.C. and lived well into the Christian era.⁸ The relevant observations of Strabo go thus :

Neleus succeeded to the possession of the library of Theophrastus, which included that of Aristotle ; for Aristotle gave his library, and left his school, to Theophrastus. Aristotle was the first person with whom we are acquainted who made a collection of books, and suggested to the Kings of Egypt the formation of a library. Theophrastus left his library to Neleus,

who carried it to Scepsis, and bequeathed it to some ignorant persons who kept the books locked up, lying in disorder. When the Scepsians understood that the Attalic kings, on whom the city was dependent, were in eager search for books, with which they intended to furnish the library at Pergamus, they hid theirs in an excavations underground ; at length, but not before they had been injured by damp and worms, the descendants of Neleus sold the books of Aristotle and Theophrastus for a large sum of money to Apellicon of Teos. Apellicon was rather a lover of books than a philosopher ; when therefore he attempted to restore the parts which had been eaten and corroded by worms, he made alterations in the original text and introduced them into new copies ; he moreover supplied the defective parts unskilfully, and published the books full of errors. It was the misfortune of the ancient Peripatetics, those after Theophrastus, that being wholly unprovided with the books of Aristotle, with the exception of a few only, and those chiefly of the exoteric kind, they were unable to philosophize according to the principles of the system, and merely occupied themselves in elaborate discussions on commonplaces. Their successors however, from the time that these books were published, philosophized, and propounded the doctrine of Aristotle more successfully than their predecessors, but were under the necessity of advancing a great deal as probable only, on account of the multitude of errors contained in the copies.

Even Rome contributed to this increase of errors ; for immediately on the death of Apellicon, Sylla, who captured Athens, seized the library of Apellicon. When it was brought to Rome, Tyrannion, the grammarian, who was an admirer of Aristotle, courted the superintendent of the library and obtained the use of it. Some vendors of books, also, employed bad scribes and neglected to compare the copies with the original. This happens in the case of other books which are copied for sale both here and at Alexandria.⁹

Some interesting points about Strabo's account deserve comments. First, Strabo's opinion of Apellicon who according to him was 'rather a lover of books than a philosopher', is corroborated in the pages of Athenaeus some two centuries later. The next interesting point is about Tyrannion.¹⁰ What lends veracity to Strabo's statement is the fact that Strabo was a direct pupil of the grammarian, as Strabo himself says elsewhere in the book.¹¹ The third point, the most important of all,

is Strabo's description of some of the works of Aristotle as *exoteric*. This is so much a part of the Aristotelian tradition that the point will have to be discussed in some detail later.

Our next most important source for the history of the transmission of the Aristotelian *corpus* is Plutarch's *Life of Sulla*. (A.D. c.45-after 120). Plutarch uses Strabo as his main source but adds to it details not found in Strabo. Thus Plutarch:

Having put to sea with all his ships from Ephesus, on the Third day he came to anchor in Piraeus. He was now initiated into the mysteries, and seized for himself the library of Apellicon the Teian, in which were most of the treatises of Aristotle and Theophrastus, at the time not yet well-known to the public. But it is said that after the library was carried to Rome, Tyrannion the grammarian arranged most of the works in it, and that Andronicus the Rhodian was furnished by him with copies of them, and published them, and drew up the lists now current. The older Peripatetics were evidently of themselves accomplished and learned men, but they seem to have had neither a large nor an exact acquaintance with the writings of Aristotle and Theophrastus, because the estate of Neleus of Scepsis, to whom Theophrastus bequeathed his books, came into the hands of careless and illiterate people.^{1 2}

The detail about Andronicus of Rhodes which Plutarch adds to the account of Strabo almost completes our knowledge of the early history of the transmission of Aristotle's works. Some details, however will have to be added to these accounts by Strabo and Plutarch from Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus. But first let us sort out the information provided by Strabo and Plutarch.

Strabo and Plutarch tell us that the works of Aristotle disappeared temporarily from the public view shortly after the death of Theophrastus in 288-85 B.C. The earlier Peripatetics, Strabo and Plutarch declare, lost touch with the works of the master at this stage. They came to light again with Apellicon of Teos acquiring them; but this exposure did them more harm than good. They were brought to Rome by Sulla in 83 B.C. after the sack of Rome, where first Tyrannion the grammarian and then Andronicus of Rhodes worked on them. We also note in passing that some Aristotelian works, obviously the less important ones as Strabo considered them at any rate, are called 'exoteric'.

Before passing on to Diogenes Laertius (1st half of the 3rd century A.D.) and Athenaeus (fl.c. A.D. 200) a few words on Andronicus of Rhodes first. Besides the numerous scholia which have survived, the

three major ancient sources for Andronicus (1st century B.C.)¹³ the 11th Scholae of the Peripatetic school in Athens counting from Aristotle are Plutarch, Porphyry in his life of Plotinus, and Boethius in his *Categories*. Of these three, Boethius is not available at the National Library. Plutarch, the earliest of the three, has already been quoted. Here is Porphyry on Andronicus:

Apollodorus, the Athenian, edited in ten volumes the collected works of Epicharmus, the comedy writer; Andronicus, the Peripatetic, classified the works of Aristotle and of Theophrastus according to subject, bringing together the discussions of related topics: I have adopted a similar plan'.¹⁴

Porphyry's classification of the works of Plotinus which is given in the same work provides us with valuable clue to the method of editing and organising Aristotle's works followed by Andronicus. Boethius (b.c. 470/480 A.D.) speaks of Andronicus as 'exactum, diligentemque Aristotelis librorum et judicem et repertorem.'¹⁵

This is all the external evidence we have for the value and the nature of the recension of Andronicus, made about 50 B.C. The scholia collected by Rose as has already been pointed out, are not available in Calcutta.

Grant sums up the contribution of Andronicus thus:

But (i.e., in spite of Plutarch, Porphyry, and Boethius) none of the great Greek commentators or Scholiasts betray any knowledge of the story about the library of Apellicon, or of the recension of Andronicus... ..Nothing, however, contradicts this hypothesis, and all internal evidence leads to the belief that '*our Aristotle*', as Grote expressed it, is the Aristotle of the recension of Andronicus.¹⁶

And thus Grote:

Our editions of Aristotle may be considered as taking their date from the critical effort of Andronicus, with or without subsequent modifications by others, as the case may be.¹⁷

There seems little doubt that the oldest existing MSS dating back to the 9th century A.D. are derived from the text of Andronicus at two or three removes.¹⁸ Earlier, Grote quotes Spengel to justify the remark that 'the critical arrangement of Aristotle's writings, for collective publication, begins from the library of Apellicon at Rome, not from that of Alexandria.'¹⁹

However, if *our Aristotle* indeed represents the edition of Andronicus, it is obvious Andronicus could not have meant his edition to be the complete works of Aristotle; for, in that case he would not have left

out the Dialogues and lighter writings from which his eminent contemporary Cicero quotes so freely. The edition of Andronicus, then, is an attempt to bring together, grouped according to their subjects, the important scientific and philosophic writings of Aristotle, and not all the works of the master.²⁰

This account of Strabo and Plutarch is partly contradicted by Athenaeus in his *Deipnosophists* (completed c.A.D.192) Athenaeus in his magnificently discursive style, while describing the exploits of Athenian, the despot, confirms in passing the story of Apellicon of having bought the library of Neleus. His version of the character of Apellicon does not differ significantly from that of Strabo and Plutarch. Thus Athenaeus :

And he [Athenian] seized not merely the property of citizens, but presently he took the goods of foreigners as well, reaching out his hands even for the property of the god at Delos. At any rate, he sent to the island Apellicon of Teos, who had been made an Athenian citizen and had run a chequered and novelty-seeking career. When, for example, he professed the Peripatetic philosophy, he bought up Aristotle's library and many other books (for he was very rich)²¹

Athenaeus, introducing one of his characters Larensis, says earlier :

...he [Larensis] owned so many ancient Greek books that he surpassed all who have been celebrated for their large libraries, including Polycrates of Samos, Peisistratus the tyrant of Athens, Euclides, likewise an Athenian, Nicocrates of Cyprus, the Kings of Pergamum, Euripides the poet, Aristotle the philosopher, Theophrastus, and Neleus, who preserved the books of the two last named. From Neleus, he [Athenaeus] says, our king Ptolemy, surnamed Philadelphus, purchased them all and transferred them with those which he had procured at Athens and at Rhodes to his beautiful capital, Alexandria.²²

The statement 'purchased them all' in the passage just quoted deserves special attention. Thus Athenaeus flatly contradicts the story of Strabo and Plutarch that the books passed from Neleus to Apellicon, and indeed his own statement quoted earlier.

Our last important source for the topic in hand is the biography of Aristotle by Diogenes Laertius, written probably in the first half of the third century A.D. Despite discrepancies, Diogenes Laertius is our single most important ancient source for Aristotle's life, his will, and a catalogue of his books. Aristotle's will, as quoted by Diogenes, contains no reference to Aristotle's library. The rest of Strabo's story, however, is confirmed in the will of Theophrastus which Diogenes

reproduces. In his will Theophrastus says clearly: 'The whole of my library I give to Neleus.' Thus Strabo's account of how the library of Aristotle and Theophrastus passed to Neleus is confirmed both by Athenaeus and the will of Theophrastus in the version of Diogenes. The question of Aristotle's will not mentioning the library however, remains.¹³ Zeller argues that this does not throw doubts on the authenticity of the will, and thinks that Aristotle must have already made arrangements for the disposal of his library and his house in Athens, and hence had no reason to refer to it again in his will. It seems highly probable that Aristotle made arrangements for the school, his town property, and his library when he was forced to leave Athens. Thus while the will of Theophrastus contains express provision for the school as well as the library, Aristotle's will is silent on both the points. Indeed, the chief concern of Aristotle's will is the future well-being of those dependent on him—his relations as well as slaves—and compared to the will of Theophrastus is curiously silent on property matters. This seems to confirm Zeller's theory.

Several problems emerge from these quoted extracts :

- (1) Did Aristotle's works really become lost to the public with the death of Theophrastus and come to light only with Andronicus of Rhodes?
- (2) Did the books of the master pass from Neleus to Ptolemy, as Athenaeus says at one place, or to Apellicon and then to Sulla, as Strabo and Plutarch say and as Athenaeus himself says elsewhere in the book?
- (3) What do we think of the reliability, or at least the historic authenticity of the catalogue of Aristotle's works furnished by Diogenes Laertius at the end of his biography of Aristotle, and other such ancient catalogues of Aristotle's works?
- (4) What does Strabo mean by the term 'exoteric' as applied to certain works of Aristotle?

A discussion of these four questions will lead to a consideration of Aristotle's extant *corpus* in relation to his works as a whole, the date of the works, the chronological position of the *Poetics* in the *corpus*, classifications of Aristotle's works with special reference to the position of the *Poetics*, and the textual tradition or traditions of Aristotle's texts. The discussion will not necessarily be in the same order as those problems have been passed here.

First the question: are Strabo and Plutarch correct in saying that most of the works of the master save some 'exoteric' ones were lost to the earlier Peripatetics following the death of Theophrastus? The story of Neleus getting the library of Theophrastus is confirmed by so many independent ancient sources including the supposed will of Theophrastus

that there is no need to doubt it. It might also be conceivably true that in order to save the books from the predatory Kings of Pergamum on the prowl for books to make an impressive library, no doubt as a status symbol calculated to do the upstart Ptolemies one in the eye, these manuscripts were in fact relegated to a cellar and were forgotten for quite some time. The question, however, remains: were not these works circulating in *other* copies? Are Strabo, and, following Strabo, Plutarch right in saying that the Peripatetics after Theophrastus were 'wholly unprovided with the books of Aristotle, with the exception of a few only, and these chiefly of the exoteric kind'? This is really the point at issue.²⁵ Grote argues that Strabo is only pointing out the poverty of the Peripatetic school-library at Athens and asserts that many of the works beside the 'exoteric' had been published before Apellicon.²⁶ In general he finds Strabo's story 'fully worthy of trust'.²⁷ He goes on to declare: 'the recovery of these long-lost original manuscripts of Aristotle and Theophrastus excited great sensation in the philosophical world of Athens and Rome.'²⁸ Grant is also more or less of the same opinion. He declares: 'there does not seem to have been any multiplication of copies, or what we should call 'publication'!'²⁹ To him Andronicus definitely means the rediscovery of *our* Aristotle, to use Grote's phrase which Grant quotes, as different from the Alexandrian Aristotle. But more of this anon. Meanwhile it should be pointed out that Grant in his earlier more detailed and scholarly work, his two volume edition of the *Ethics* with introductory essays, gives his reasons for doubting Strabo's account³⁰ which Zeller repeats in his work with some additions of his own. Grant's conclusion in this work is very similar to Zeller's: 'It was rather the apathy of the Peripatetics which caused the great works of Aristotle to be forgotten, than that the loss of those works causes the paralysis of the school.'³¹

Zeller is prepared to grant all the facts to Strabo and Plutarch including, of course, the epoch-making importance of the edition of Andronicus of Rhodes. He only questions Strabo's assertion that the earlier Peripatetics before Apellicon did not have access to the scientific treatises of Aristotle. First, Zeller points out, there is no awareness among the ancients concerned with such things of such an important event as the rediscovery of at least the main body of the Aristotelian *corpus*. Cicero who was in Rome at that time and had active intercourse with Tyrannion who, we know from Cicero himself, was teaching Cicero's sons in 57 B.C., does not say a word about it: nor does anyone else who directly used the very works of Andronicus. Later Alexandrian Editors did not in anyway feel bound by the text of Andronicus.³² On

the other hand, Zeller adduces direct evidence to demonstrate that not only the exoteric treatises like the dialogues but also the strictly scientific ones were known between the death of Theophrastus and the sack of Athens by Sulla. Particularly important in this connection is the case of one of Aristotle's direct pupils, Eudemus who is supposed to have imitated the master, sometimes copying his very words, in his works.⁸³ By a strange stroke of luck a letter has survived in which Eudemus, while away from Athens and working on the *Physics*, writes to Theophrastus for the actual text of a certain passage in Aristotle's *Physics*, as his own copy is defective.⁸⁴ This clearly shows that the students of the school took away copies of the important texts with them. There is enough evidence to show that the famous library of Alexandria, a collection begun by Ptolemy Philadelphus, contained a large number of Aristotle's works. In fact, Ptolemy paid such high prices for them that it was a positive encouragement to forgeries, some of which have survived to our days, the pseudo-Aristotelian *Letters to Alexander* for example. The catalogue of Diogenes Laertius is an important piece of evidence here; for, this catalogue is probably a copy of the relevant parts of the catalogue of the Alexandrian library. Besides these pieces of circumstantial evidence, Zeller points out, there is direct evidence to indicate that many of the non-exoteric works of Aristotle were known and used during the period under discussion.⁸⁵ The Stoics in the 3rd century B.C. followed closely the lead of Aristotle in logic and physics, both strictly, non-exoteric works. Besides the evidence of the catalogue of Diogenes Laertius, there is additional evidence to show that, among others, *Analytics*, *Categories*, *Physics*, *Natural History*, *De Anima*, *Metaphysics*, *Ethics*, *Politics*, *Economics*, and last but, as they say in Bengali, not the least for our purpose, the *Poetics* were known and used. Zeller concludes his argument thus: 'The belief of Strabo and Plutarch that the scientific writings of Aristotle were after the death of Theophrastus all but wholly withdrawn from access is therefore wholly negated by the facts. A few of the writings may possibly have suffered the fate which they ascribe to the whole...' This opinion of Zeller, however, has been partially challenged by later scholars on points of fact. It has been argued, for example, that the *Politics* and the *Analytics* were in fact not known during this period.⁸⁶ Ross in his note on Aristotle in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* seems to accept without reservation the accounts of Plutarch and Strabo.

The position, after Zeller, then briefly is this: quite a few of Aristotle's non-exoteric works were known even before Andronicus, but the edition of Andronicus at last gave them a new life. It was the

revival of Platonism after Theophrastus rather than the non-availability of the essential texts of Aristotle which was responsible for the decline of the Peripatetic school after the death of Theophrastus.

The next question on our list is: did the library of Aristotle and Theophrastus pass from Neleus to Ptolemy or from the heirs of Neleus to Apellicon? We have already pointed out that the two statements of Athenaeus on this point are contradictory. Apart from anything else, 'all the books of Aristotle' could not have passed to Ptolemy from Neleus, as is evidenced by the catalogue of Aristotle's books in the Alexandrian library, Athenaeus therefore, need not be taken on this point very seriously.

The next question is concerned with the reliability and the historic authenticity of the catalogue of Diogenes Laertius and other such ancient catalogues. With this is linked the question of the textual tradition of Aristotle's works.³⁷

We have two ancient catalogues of Aristotle's works. The first has come down in two recensions, one by Diogenes Laertius, the other called the 'Anonymous Menagi'. The author of this second recension, Rose conjectures, was probably one Hesychius of Miletus who lived about 500 A.D.³⁸ Ross at first treats this as a separate catalogue, though later he asserts that both these lists are probably based on a catalogue compiled by Hermippus.³⁹ Of these two, the catalogue of Diogenes Laertius is available at the National Library, the catalogue of the 'Anonymous' is not.⁴⁰ The second catalogue has survived in two Arabic translations of a Greek original. The catalogue of Diogenes has 146 titles. The version of the 'Anonymous' leaves a few of the titles out of this catalogue and adds seven or eight new ones. This second version has an appendix of 47 titles, most of them repetitions and variants of those already mentioned. The total number of books of which these titles are made up is roughly the same in both the recensions—about 400.

The most significant thing about this catalogue of Diogenes—the 'Anonymous' is not being mentioned here as the present writer did not have an opportunity to examine it personally—is that while it mentions many works of Aristotle of which we know nothing, it fails to mention many others which we would consider central.⁴¹ Just in passing, the *Poetics* is there all right in this catalogue.

Now Aristotelicum as has already been mentioned earlier, if indeed our *Corpus* is descended from Andronicus, since the catalogue in question differs so considerably from a catalogue of the *Corpus* as we know it—we only have about 40 of Aristotle's works—it is highly probable

that this catalogue represents a tradition earlier than that which has descended from Andronicus: which in effect means it represents the Alexandrian tradition. Diogenes obviously did not compile the list himself but had copied it from some other catalogue. The similarity between this list and that of the 'Anonymous' suggests such a common source. Besides, Diogenes himself quotes from works of Aristotle not in his list.⁴³ For example, he quotes from the 7th book of the *Ethics* although the catalogue gives only five books to the same work.⁴³ Similarly, he refers to the *Magicus* though there is no mention of the work in the catalogue.⁴⁴ This would seem to indicate that the list of Diogenes has been copied out by him from some other catalogue and is not of his own compilation. A lot of scholarly speculation has been expended on the probable authorship of the original catalogue. A strong candidate for the distinction is one Hermippus who wrote about 200 B.C. Hermippus⁴⁵ is one of the sources of Diogenes for the life of Aristotle.⁴⁶ Hermippus is also quoted as one of the authorities on the life of Aristotle by Athenaeus.⁴⁷ Grant holds with Grote that the catalogue contains the titles of books under the name of Aristotle in the Alexandrian library in the 3rd century B.C.; that it was originally made by either Callimachus, the chief librarian at Alexandria, or by his pupil Hermippus, between the years 240-210 B.C.; that it found its way into some biography of Aristotle, and was thence mechanically copied by Diogenes, in ignorance or disregard of the edition of Andronicus.⁴⁸ P. Moraux, a modern scholar, has attributed this list to a later Peripatetic, one Ariston of Chios.⁴⁹

The original Greek version of the second catalogue is believed to be by one 'Ptolemy' who lived in the 2nd century A.D. usually described as 'Ptolemy the Philosopher', to distinguish him from other Ptolemies in history. One Ibn el Kifti (d. 1248) and one Ibn Abi Oseibia (d. 1269) translated the work of this Ptolemy, which comprised of a biography of the master and a list of his books, into Arabic.⁵⁰ While the Greek original has perished, these two incomplete Arabic translations have survived. The original author of this list seems to have made a list of about a thousand books, not titles, by Aristotle, though the incomplete Arabic versions themselves give only about one hundred titles, comprised of about 550 books.⁵¹ Here we are treading on a ground different from the one covered by Diogenes and the 'Anonymous'. If the date ascribed to the catalogue is correct, i.e. the 2nd century A.D. there is a gap of 400 years between Catalogue 1 and Catalogue 2, the important event of the edition of Andronicus forming a sort of watershed somewhere in the middle of the period. That the compiler of

Catalogue 2, whoever he was, came *after* Andronicus and was aware of his work is evident from the references not only to Andronicus but also to Apellicon. Significantly, almost the whole of the extant *Corpus*, *our* Aristotle as Grant would put it, is represented by this catalogue with the exception of a few important works such as the *Ethics*.⁵² It is reasonable to ascribe these omissions to the incomplete nature of the list as it has come down to us *via* the Arabs. These two lists therefore may be said to represent the two traditions of Aristotle—one, the older pre-Andronican, Alexandrian tradition ; the other, the later post-Andronican tradition, the tradition we have mainly inherited. While speaking of the Andronican tradition, a warning should be given against a too literal interpretation of the term 'Andronican'. We should be careful to avoid reaching such a fallacious conclusion as, after Andronicus, therefore because of Andronicus'. This is Grote's conclusion : '*our* Aristotle is traceable to the collection at Athens...they [these scientific treatises] never became fully published until the days of Apellicon'.⁵³ Zeller's argument against this too rigid a position has already been referred to. A safer conclusion, therefore, would be that the editorial work of Andronicus gave the Aristotelian *Corpus* a new life. It was no doubt helped by the bringing over of the library of Aristotle and Theophrastus to Rome. But this is not to say that they were not known or used at all in the intervening period between the death of Theophrastus and Apellicon's purchase of the library of Neleus ; they very probably were. Even Grote's assertion that these works did not become fully published until the days of Apellicon is, therefore, correct only in a technical sense—that these writings had not been arranged for publication by the authors. If Zeller is right, these writings had a wider circulation and a greater influence than what Grote's observations would seem to suggest.

It is certainly curious that of the two traditions of Aristotle only one should survive while the other, the Alexandrian tradition, should perish. Grant's conjecture on this point is interesting.⁵⁴ Grant argues that numerous copies of the entire works of Aristotle, as classified and edited by Andronicus, must have been made both for public and for private collections. The wealth of Rome made it easier to have such a large number of copies made. We know from Plutarch, for example, that such copies were supplied by Rome to even Alexandria. In this form of codices of *opera omnia* or at least single volumes containing all the works of Aristotle on a subject, as classified by Andronicus, the works had a better chance of survival than manuscripts of isolated and unrelated single works like the dialogues or notes containing scientific observa-

tions for future use. Again, these lighter works did not, deservedly, attract sufficient attention from the early commentators and scholars, and thus, suffering scholarly neglect, disappeared almost whole except in isolated fragments embedded in other people's writings.

Now about the content of these two traditions of Aristotle. While there are works common to both, the *Poetics* for example, the divergences between the two are considerable enough to justify our calling them two traditions. What then is the nature of the difference between the two traditions as represented by the two catalogues mentioned above? This question leads directly to the problem of the classification of Aristotle's works.

For one thing, the list of Diogenes opens with a whole group of a class of writing of which we know nothing. These are the nineteen 'dialogues' with a distinct Platonic bias in the titles. One of them in fact is entitled *Symposium*.⁵⁵ It was through these writings that Cicero chiefly knew his Aristotle. Here then is a case for a classification of the *Corpus* not only as we know it, but as it is represented by the two catalogues mentioned above.⁵⁶ Most Aristotelian scholars have evolved separate systems of classification of their own. The classification of Zeller is being given here as an example of this kind of scholarly classification.

(1) Non-philosophical writings of a personal nature and literary efforts such as letters, poems, and occasional pieces. A very small number of such writings has survived.

(2) Dialogues dealing with philosophical and scientific matters, arranged for publication and according to popular taste most probably by the author himself. Some important works of this kind have survived in large and numerous fragments, such as the *Eudemus*, and *On Philosophy*. These two works at least show the almost total influence of Plato. It has been argued therefore that dialogues such as these were written during Aristotle's first Athenian period when he was a young member of Plato's Academy.

(3) The third group of Aristotle's works consists of strictly academic writings. These alone, apart from the *Athenian Constitution* discovered in 1890, seem to have survived. They have been classified by Zeller under the following subject-headings :

- (a) Works on logic such as the group known at least since the 6th century as the *Organon*.
- (b) Metaphysics.
- (c) Natural philosophy. i.e., study of Nature, organic and inorganic.

(d) Social sciences. The *Ethics*, *Politics*, and even the *Rhetoric* fall in this sub-group.

(e) Theory and history of Art. The only surviving example of this class of writing is the *Poetics*.

(4) There is a fourth group of writings consisting of notes of observation to be used in future writings.⁵⁷

It should be noted that barring the *Rhetoric*, the placing of which in a list of Aristotle's works on the arts is uncertain, of all Aristotle's writings on literary and artistic subjects, only the *Poetics* has survived. The catalogue of Diogenes mentions the following such works :

- (i) *On Poets*, three books.
- (ii) *On Rhetoric*, or *Grylus*, one book.
- (iii) *On the Beautiful*, one book.
- (iv) *A Collection of Arts* (i.e., *Handbooks*), two books.
- (v) Two books of the *Art of Rhetoric*
- (vi) *Art, a Handbook*, one book.
- (vii) Another collection of *Handbooks*, two books.
- (viii) *Compendium of the 'Art' of Theodectes*, one book.
- (ix) *A Treatise on the Art of Poetry*, two books, (*our Poetics*).
- (x) *Rhetorical Enthymemes*, one book.
- (xi) *On Music*, one book.
- (xii) Six books of *Homeric Problems*.
- (xiii) *Poetics*, one book.
- (xiv) *Dramatic Victories of the Dionysia*, one book.
- (xv) *Of Tragedies*, one book.
- (xvi) *Dramatic Records*, one book.

Even allowing for certain repetitions in a list which is probably a catalogue not of the *Corpus* but of the MSS actually at the Alexandrian library entered under the name of Aristotle, this long list of sixteen works on art, literary criticism, and allied subjects indicates that the master must have given serious thought to this subject. The *Poetics* therefore, should not be taken as the casual observations of a keen mind, the chief pre-occupations of which, however, were logic, natural philosophy, and social philosophy. As it so happens, one whole class of Aristotle's writings has reached us only in a fragmentary version of a single work. Before finally putting a label of classification on the *Poetics* as the unique example of a particular class of writing by Aristotle, we must refer to Aristotle's own classification of his work.

Aristotle divided all philosophy into two classes, theoretic and practical.⁵⁸ Thus Physics, Mathematics, and Metaphysics are theoretic, and Ethics, Economics, and Politics are practical philosophies. The enquiries

belonging to the first group are directed to cognition, those belonging to the second group to action. Diogenes gives the following classification immediately after the catalogue :

Such is the number of works written by him. And in them he puts forward the following views. There are two divisions of philosophy, the practical and the theoretical. The practical part includes ethics and politics...The theoretical part includes physics and logic....⁵⁹

In Aristotle himself we find sufficient indications to support this classification.⁶⁰ Aristotle himself often makes a distinction between theoretical and practical reason. In the *De Anima*, for example, he asks what makes the living creature move in space, i.e., act. No one part of the soul is responsible for it. Not the generative and nutritive faculties, nor the sensitive faculty.

Nor is the reasoning faculty, which is called mind, the motive principle, for the speculative mind thinks of nothing practical, and does not comment on what is to be avoided or pursued...Even when the mind speculates on anything of the kind, it does not issue orders to avoid or to pursue...Speaking generally, we see that the man possessing knowledge of the healing art is not always healing, so that there is some other factor which causes action in accordance with knowledge and not knowledge itself.⁶¹

Again, later in the same book of the work :

There are clearly, then, two agents which produce movement, appetite and mind...These together, then, mind and appetite, are responsible for movement in space.⁶²

Here then is clear juxtaposition between the purely cognitive part of the soul, mind, and the appetitive part, desire or inclination. One by itself leads only to cognition, the special province of the speculative mind, the other to action. In the *Nichomachean Ethics* Aristotle makes a similar but slightly more elaborately worked out assertion :

Now there are three elements in the soul which control action and the attainment of truth : namely, Sensation, Intellect, and Desire. Of these Sensation never originates action... Pursuit and avoidance in the sphere of Desire correspond to affirmation and denial in the sphere of the Intellect.⁶³

The word Intellect here is a translation of the Greek word *nous* which has in the context the usual philosophic sense of the intellect, or rational parts of the soul, as a whole whose function is *dianoia*, thought in general.

Another clear statement to the same effect can be found in the *Politics* :
 ...the rational part (of the soul) is subdivided into two, ...
 for reason is of two kinds, practical and theoretic,...⁶⁴

Aristotle's celebrated distinction between intellectual and moral virtues is based on this two-fold division of the faculties of the mind.

If the faculties of the mind are two, it follows that the enquiries of the mind must also be of two kinds, one directed to Cognition, the other to Action. This distinction between *gnosis*, Cognition, and *praxis*, Action, is therefore ubiquitous in the *Ethics*. The *Ethics* begins thus :

Every art and every investigation...seems to aim at some good...
 (it is true that a certain variety is to be observed among the ends at which the arts and sciences aim : in some cases the activity of practising the art is itself the end, whereas in others the end is some product over and above the mere exercise of the art ;⁶⁵

A few lines later : 'the end of this science [Politics] is not Knowledge but Action.'⁶⁶ Later, again, in the same work :

...our present study, unlike the other branches of philosophy, has a practical aim (for we are not investigating the nature of virtue for the sake of knowing what it is, but in order that we may become good...)⁶⁷

Quite early in the Peripatetic school a division of the Sciences into the *Theoretic* and the *Practical* became established. Thus, Book II (a) of the *Metaphysics*, a book which is supposed to be a later essay by one of Aristotle's pupils,⁶⁸ declares :

The object of theoretic knowledge is truth, while that of practical knowledge is action ; ⁶⁹

In the *Eudemian Ethics*, a work which may not be of direct Aristotelian authorship,⁷⁰ we read :

About everything and every natural species there are many views .. ; of these some relate only to our knowledge of the thing, others deal with modes of acquiring it and acting in relation to it.⁷¹

This then is the evidence of the mode of thinking of the Aristotelian school on this point. Turning to the works of undoubted Aristotelian authorship, we soon find a third category, 'poetic action', being added to the main two-fold division, Cognition and Action. In Book VI of the *Metaphysics*, for example, Aristotle distinguishes between *poesis* or 'creative action', and *praxis* or ordinary action, whence the subdivision 'poetic or creative or productive science' :

And since physical science also happens to deal with a genus of Being, obviously it is neither a practical nor a produc-

tive science. ... Thus if every intellectual activity is either practical or productive or speculative, physics will be a speculative science ;⁷²

A few lines later we come up against the same idea :

...no science, whether practical, productive, or speculative, concerns itself with it ["being"].⁷³

Here, then, we find the concept of a three-fold division of the activities of the mind firmly established. The same idea can be found in other works as well. In the *Topica*, for instance, we find : 'it [knowledge] is said to be theoretical, practical, and creative.'⁷⁴ and later, '...some sciences are theoretical, others practical and others creative.'⁷⁵ On the distinction between 'creative or productive action' and ordinary 'action', the *Ethics* is also illuminating. Here Aristotle says that one of the five qualities through which the mind attains Truth is art.⁷⁶ Of art itself he says : 'The class of things that admit variation includes both things made and actions done. But making is different from doing ..'⁷⁷ Again, in the *Metaphysics* we have :

In the productive sciences ... the substance ... is the object ; but in the speculative sciences the formula or the act of thinking is the object.⁷⁸

In an earlier book of the *Metaphysics* we meet with the statement : 'all arts, i.e., the productive sciences, are potencies', etc.⁷⁹ The main distinction between these two kinds of action is this : *praxis* has its end in the activity of the actor, *poesis* has its end outside the action itself in the work the action brings into being.⁸⁰ We need not concern ourselves here with the three-fold sub-division of 'theoretic knowledge' which Aristotle makes.⁸¹ Taking note of this three-fold division of the sciences into theoretic, practical, and productive or poetic, we see that the *Poetics* is the only extant example of Aristotle's writings in the last named group. The *Rhetoric*, incidentally, has been excluded by Aristotle himself from the class 'poetic science' and subjoined to Dialectics and Politics. In the *Rhetoric* itself he says : '...Rhetoric is...an offshoot of Dialectic and the science of Ethics, which may be reasonably called Politics.'⁸² In the *Ethics* he makes a similar observation :

We observe that even the most highly esteemed of the faculties, such as strategy, domestic economy, oratory, are subordinate to the political science.⁸³

Thus, whichever way we look at it, whether we follow the classification made by Aristotle himself, or that made by the modern scholars like Zeller, the *Poetics* occupies a unique place among the extant Aristotelian writings, standing as it does in a class by itself.

Next is the question of date, and the position of the *Poetics* in the chronology of the extant *Corpus*. The chief 19th century authority on this question is Zeller.⁸⁴ Among modern scholars, Jaeger has taken a stand different from Zeller's. We shall come to it in due course.

It was generally agreed till Jaeger came out with his thesis in 1923 that all the extant writings of Aristotle including the *Athenian Constitution*, discovered in the sands of Egypt in 1890, belong to his second Athenian period, i.e., to the years 335/4 B.C. to 323 B.C., roughly a decade. Our evidence with regard to the dates and chronology of Aristotle's works is of two kinds. First, we have references to historical events and dates in the texts themselves. Secondly, there is a whole system of cross references in Aristotle's works binding them together. Sometimes these cross references are confusing when, for example, two works cite each other ; but, normally, they are a valuable guide to the chronology of the works.

References to historical dates in Aristotle's works are numerous.⁸⁵ In the firstbook of the *Meteorologica*, for example, Aristotle says :

Again in the archonship of Nicomachus a comet appeared in the equinotical region for a few days (this one had not risen in the west)...⁸⁶

The temporal reference here is precise. The archonship of Nicomachus is placed in B.C.341 ; the work, therefore, could not have been written earlier than that date. In book V of the *Politics* Aristotle refers to the murder of Philip which took place in B.C.336.⁸⁷ Book II of the *Rhetoric* refers to the 'common peace' concluded between Alexander the Great and the Greeks in 336 after the death of Philip.⁸⁸ Brandis has shown that the many Attic orators quoted in the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* belong to a time after Aristotle's first departure from Athens, and the same is true of the works of Theodectes which these two works quote.⁸⁹ In the *Metaphysics* XII Aristotle refers to Eudoxus, "a famous astronomer and mathematician, and a pupil of Plato, who died in c.347 B.C.⁹⁰ as though he was already dead."⁹¹ Books VII and X of the *Ethics*, too, refer in the same manner to Eudoxus and to Speusippus who succeeded Plato in the Academy and died in c.339/338 B.C.⁹² The next instance is very interesting indeed. Aristotle in the *History of Animals* gives some exact descriptions of the physical characteristics and habits of elephants. In book II he writes :

The elephant has four teeth on either side, by which it munches its food, grinding it like so much barley-meal, and, quite apart from these, it has its great teeth, or tusks, two in number. In the male these tusks are comparatively large and curved upwards ;

in the female, they are comparatively small at point in the opposite direction ; that is, they look downwards towards the ground. The elephant is furnished with teeth at birth, but tusks are not then visible⁹³.

No less exact is his account of the food habits of the elephant in book VIII :

The elephant at the most can eat nine Macedonian medimni of fodder at one meal ; but so large an amount is unwholesome. As a general rule it can take six or seven medimni of fodder, five medimni of wheat, and five *mareis* of wine—six cotylae going to the *maris*. An elephant has been known to drink right off fourteen Macedonian *metretae* of water, and another eight *metretae* later in the day⁹⁴.

One can see immediately that these are accounts based on direct personal observation. Rose has shown⁹⁵ that these passages could have been written only after the battle of Arbela in 331 B.C. when the Macedonians saw elephants for the first time, and very probably even later, after the Indian expedition (B.C.327-25) had been well under way.

No more instances need be given of this kind of date references in the texts of Aristotle. When a work with some such internal evidence which fixes its earliest date limit mentions a projected work, the date limit for this later work can be deduced from the former. Thus such temporal references are important not only for the dating of the works themselves in which they occur, but also for the dating of the works which are mentioned in them.

Another interesting kind of evidence provided by Aristotle's texts is the number of casual references to things and events which would be of interest only to an Athenian public. It is reasonable to assume that the works bearing this kind of reference were written while Aristotle was in Athens. That they were written during Aristotle's second Athenian period is established by the temporal references. For example, a work which was written after B.C.345 and with an Athenian public in view, it is reasonable to suppose, was composed during his second Athenian period. Sometimes the evidence is more direct. In the *Categories*, for instance, Aristotle twice gives the expression 'in the Lyceum' as an example of an expression indicating place⁹⁶. In the *Physica*, again, we come across the following statement : '...the sophists assume that Corsicus' being in the Lyceum is a different thing from Corsicus' being in the market place⁹⁷. Again, the *Rhetoric* mentions the Lyceum quite casually⁹⁸. But let us go back to those passages which seem to have been written with an Athenian public in view. In the

Analytica Priora Aristotle presents the following dialectical model :

For example let A be evil, B making war against neighbours,
C Athenians against Thebans, D Thebans against Phocians⁹⁹.

In book III of the *Physica* there is a reference to 'the road from Thebes to Athens.. from Athens to Thebes.'¹⁰⁰ In book V of the *Metaphysics* there is a reference to sailing to Aegina as an example of a health-giving journey.¹⁰¹ The Athenian festivals of Dionysia and Thragelia are mentioned in the same book of the *Metaphysics* to illustrate the meanings of the prepositions 'from' and 'out of'.¹⁰² Again in the same book of the work the journey to Aegina is mentioned once again to illustrate a completely different point.¹⁰³ Now, we know that the *Metaphysics*, as we have it, is a loose collection of books written at different times. This bunching together in this one book of references to Athens and things of Athenian interest suggests that at least this book was written while Aristotle was in Athens. The point of the references to the actor Theodorus in the *Rhetoric*¹⁰⁴ and the *Politics*¹⁰⁵ would be clear only to an Athenian familiar with the acting and voice techniques of this popular Athenian actor. Besides these instances, there are numerous references to Athens, Athenians, and Athenian customs in Aristotle's works.

Next, the question of the chronological order of the extant texts. Given below is the chronology of the major works of Aristotle, suggested by Zeller on grounds of internal cross references, temporal references in the texts themselves, and Aristotle's own casual pronouncements on the subject.¹⁰⁶ Zeller ascribes the entire extant *Corpus* to Aristotle's second Athenian period.

Logic : *The Categories* ;

The Topica, including the book on Fallacies ;

The Analytics.

The Metaphysics V.

Natural Philosophy :

Physica, *De Caelo*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *Meteorologica* ; *Natural History* and *De Anima* (not certain which is earlier) ; *The Parts of Animals*, *The Movement of Animals*, *The Genesis of Animals*.

Social Philosophy :

The Ethics, *The Politics* (a loose collection of essays not arranged and collected together by the he author himself).

art : *The Poetics*.

Social Philosophy :

The Rheroric.

The Metaphysics is a loose collection of books left unarranged by the master. Some serious objections to this dating and chronology of Zeller's came from Jaeger in 1923.¹⁰⁷ whom Ross accepts.¹⁰⁸ Of late, however, a reaction has set in against Jaeger, and his working assumption that the philosophical thoughts of Aristotle developed in a straight line from a Platonic idealism to Empiricism has been more or less rejected.¹⁰⁹

Jaeger places the Dialogues in the 1st Athenian period of Aristotle. To the period of Aristotle's stay in Assos and Macedon he ascribes *The Organon*, *The Physics*, *The De Caelo*, the *Generatione et Corruptione*, the *De Anima* bk III, the *Eubemian Ethics* (accepting it as a genuine work), the oldest parts of the *Metaphysics* and the *politics*, and the earliest parts of the *Historia Animalum*. In Aristotle's second Athenian period he puts the *Meteorologica*, the *Constitutions*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *poetics*, and the *Rhetoric*.

We are, however, concerned chiefly with the placing of the *poetics* and no body has questioned its placing in the second Athenian period. Let us, then, round off the present discussion on the dates and chronology of Aristotle's works with some brief observations on the dates of the *poetics* itself.¹¹⁰

The facts of the case here are clear enough. That the *poetics* was written in the second Athenian period is shown by the temporal reference in the text itself. The work of Brandis on this point has already been referred to. Additional corroborative evidence is supplied by the numerous temporal references in the *Rhetoric* and the many references to the *poetics* in the *Rhetoric* as a past work. In book I of the *Rhetoric* Aristotle says: 'The ridiculous has been discussed separately in the *poetics*.'¹¹¹ Again, in book III he says that he will discuss here only prose style, 'As for the other kind of style (i. e., poetic style), it has already been treated in the *poetic*.'¹¹² The reference here is clearly to ch. XXII of the *Xoerics*. Again, a few lines later he says: 'of nouns and verbs it is the proper ones that make style perspicuous; all the others which have been spoken of in the *poetics* elevate and make it ornate; for departure from the ordinary makes it appear more dignified.'¹¹³ Obviously ch. XXI of the *poetics* is being referred to here where ornamental and metaphorical words have been discussed. A few lines further on Aristotle says:

Nouns and verbs being the components of speech, and nouns being of the two different kinds which have been considered in the *poetics*, of these we should use strange, compound, or coined words only rarely and in few places.¹¹⁴

The reference here is obviously to the following sentence in particular in the *poerics* XXI :

Every word is either current, or strange, or metaphorical, or ornamental, or new lycoined, or lengthened, or contracted, or altered.¹¹⁵

Again a few lines later in the *Rhetoric*:

It has already been stated, as we have said, in the *poetics*, what each of these things (i.e., different kinds of words) is, how many kinds of metaphor there are, and that it is most important both in poetry and in prose.¹¹⁶

The reference here, obviously, is to the *poetics* ch. XXI and XXII, ix.

The *Poetics* is referred to once again towards the end of the *Rhetoric* :

We have stated in the *Poetics* how many kinds of jests there are, some of them becoming a gentleman, other not.¹¹⁷

In all these extracts, quoted from the *Rhetoric*, the *Poetics*, it should be noted, is mentioned as a work already in existence, and in most cases we can even trace the actual passages to which the *Rhetoric* refers. In book VIII of the *Politics* on the other hand we come across a reference to the *Poetics* as a projected work only :

—the term purgation we use for the present without explanation, but we will return to discuss the meaning that we give to it more explicitly in our treatise on poetry (i.e., the *Poetics*—¹¹⁸

There is no unanimity among the modern scholars over the date of book VIII of the *Politics*.¹¹⁹ Some would put it among the earlier books of the *politics* which are supposed to belong to the period of Aristotle's stay in Assos and Macedon ; others in the later group. However, this much is clear : the *poetics* must have been written *after* the *politics* VIII and *before* the *Rhetoric*. If indeed the *politics* belong to the period of Aristotle's stay in Assos and Macedon, the *Poetics* also must have been planned out as early as that even if we take it that it was actually written out much later.

Another point of major interest emerges from these references to the *Poetics* in the *Rhetorics*. In the very first reference to the *Poetics* in the *Rhetoric*, quoted above, we read that a discussion of the ludicrous has been made in the *Poetics*. In the work as we have it, there is merely a promise of such a discussion at the beginning of ch. VI following the brief historical sketch of the origin of the Comedy in ch. V. The last reference to the *Poetics* in the *Rhetoric*, quoted above, mentions a classification of jests in the *Poetics*. There is, of course, no such classification in the work as it now exists. All this leads us to believe that the *Poetics*, as we know it, is only a fragment of the original work, the part containing the discussion on Comedy being missing. There is

additional evidence to support this view.¹²⁰ Both the ancient catalogues of Aristotle's works, the one by the 'Anonymous' and the other by Diogenes, give two books to the *Poetics*. The relevant portion of the catalogue of Diogenes has already been quoted. Zeller quotes the ancient commentators and scholiasts to show that the more ancient of them were in fact acquainted with two books on poetry, whereas we know of only one.¹²¹ The explanation of the term *Catharsis* in the *Poetics*, promised in the *Politics*, is in fact absent in *our Poetics*, an omission which has proved to be one of the chief sources of raw materials for the Aristotle industry even since the Renaissance. Now, this elusive explanation actually seems to have been there once, as suggested by traces gathered together by Aristotle scholars like Bernays, Susemihl, and Vahlen, in their editions, none of which is available at the National Library here. The tradition of the two books of the *Poetics* seems to have survived at least up to the High Middle Ages. Eustratius (c.A.D. 1100) cites the reference to the Homeric *Margites* in ch. IV of the *Poetics* in his *Ethics* (1141 a, 14) as occurring in book I of the *Poetics*, thereby implying the existence of a second book. The subscription of William of Moerbeke's Latin translation of the *Poetics* completed in 1278, incidentally, the first complete Latin translation of the *Poetics* reads: 'Primus Aristotelis de arte Poetica liber explicit'. Again, the reference to the 1st book of the *Poetics* implies the existence of a second book.¹²² Whether or not the manuscript used by Moerbeke actually had this second book, it seems certain it had a title or subtitle very similar to the one which has reached us in Moerbeke's translation. The present text of the work shows many other signs of being defective. For example, chapters VII to XVIII deal with the plot. But the continuity of the argument is broken by the intrusion of ch. XII, thought to be an interpolation, and ch. XV, the chapter on character, which really should have come after ch. XVIII, i.e., after the conclusion of the discussion on plot. These, and other lacunae in the text, too numerous to be listed here, lead us to think that the extant text is a mutilated version of an original, now lost. Thus, whether or not the *Politics* was originally in two books, there is a strong case for thinking that it was much longer than the existing version, and, moreover, the present text is not only fragmentary, it is also defective even in the parts that have survived.

Finally, the vexed question of the 'exoteric' and 'non-exoteric' works of Aristotle.¹²³ When dealing with Strabo the importance of this classification used by Strabo was duly pointed out, and a full discussion on it promised.

Cicero, Quintillian (b.c. A.D. 35), and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (fl. 1st c. B.C.) praise Aristotle not only for his subject-matter but also for his style. Cicero says that the works of Aristotle are to be recommended not only for their contents, 'but also for their elegance or sweetness of style.'¹²⁴ In the *De Inventione* Cicero declares that Aristotle has left the old orators far behind 'in the sweetness and conciseness of his teaching'.¹²⁵ In the *De Oratore* Cicero says :

And if Plato spoke with the voice of a god of things very far away from political debate,...if again Aristotle and Theophrastus style and Carneades.. were eloquent and displayed charm of style and literary form, then, granting that the topics of their discourse may be found in certain other fields of research, yet their actual style is the peculiar product of this pursuit which we are now discussing and investigating, and of no other.¹²⁶

In the *De Finibus* of Cicero, Lucius Torquatus, a disciple of Epicurus, asks Cicero to explain his dislike of Epicurus :

The fact is, I think that you...dislike Epicurus because he has neglected the graces of style that you find in your Plato, Aristotle and Theophrastus.¹²⁷

A more direct praise of Aristotle's literary style is found in Cicero's *Academica* :

...when your Stoic wise man aforesaid has told you these facts one syllable at a time, in will come Aristotle, pouring forth a golden stream of eloquence, ..¹²⁸

Quintillian is also lavish in his praise of Aristotle's literary style. Thus Quintillian in the *Institutio Oratoria* :

Why should I dwell on the elegance of the rest of the Socratics ? or on Aristotle, with regard to whom I hesitate whether to praise him more for his knowledge, for the multitude of his writings, the sweetness of his style, the penetration revealed by his discoveries or the variety of the tasks which he essayed ?¹²⁹

Dionysius of Halicarnassus considers that of the philosophers Democritus, Plato, and Aristotle are the best as to style.¹³⁰

Nothing we have of Aristotle justifies, however, such fulsome praise of Aristotle's literary style, this repeated reference to his 'sweet style', his 'golden stream of eloquence'. The style of *our* Aristotle in fact displays just the opposite qualities. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassu and Quintillian must have had those writings in mind which have not survived, and which, probably, had been arranged for publication and subsequently published by the author himself. Indeed, except for the *Topica* and the *Rhetorica*,

the Aristotle that Cicero and Quintillian knew was not *our* Aristotle at all. They seem to have known their Aristotle almost entirely through the Dialogues and other such popular writings.¹⁸¹ It seems, therefore, that Strabo meant just such works when he declared that only the *exoteric* works continued to be known and read after the death of Theophrastus and before the purchase of the library of Neleus by Apellicon. Fragments of such writings which have survived show that they were in fact written in a much more ornate style than any work we now possess. We have also the *Athenian Constitution*, discovered at the end of the last century in the sands of Egypt, which provides us with a similar kind of evidence. The evidence of this work, written sometime between 328 and 325 B. C., i.e., very late in Aristotle's life, is important, as it shows that a consciously literary style cannot be equated with Aristotle's early style, which would be a plausible argument if we took only the evidence of the Dialogues into account. This kind of style, may, therefore, be said to be the attribute of a particular kind of writing, probably the kind called 'exoteric' by Strabo.

Before positively identifying the *exoteric* with such kind of writing, we must first trace the history of the phrase. At this point we shall be obliged to refer to the original Greek phrase itself, which is *exotericoi logoi*, as the translators frequently do not retain the expression *exoteric*. Aristotle himself refers a number of times to the *exotericoi logoi* or the 'exoteric discourse'. In the *Politics* I, Aristotle uses the word *exoteric* to signify a subject not immediately related to the subject in hand. In the Loeb translation the sentence reads: 'However, this matter perhaps belongs to an investigation lying somewhat outside our subject', 'lying somewhat outside our subject' being a translation of the Greek word *exotericoteras*.¹⁸² In book II of the same work, again, we come across the statement:

...the rest of the discourse he [Socrates] has filled up with external topics, and about the sort of education it is proper for the guardians to have.¹⁸³

The word *exoteric* here has been used in almost the same sense as in the previous passage, 'external topics' being a translation of the Greek phrase *exother logois*. Book IV, ch. X of the *Physica* begins thus:

The subject of inquiry next in succession is 'time'. It will be well to begin with the questions which general reflections suggest as to its existence or non-existence and its nature.¹⁸⁴

'General reflections' here is the Loeb translator's rendering of the Greek *exotericon logon*. This is followed by a general discussion on the nature of Time which is not meant to be a thorough or conclusive

analysis of the problem. There is an implied contrast here between a strictly logical discussion and a general preliminary survey, a point which is better illustrated in Aristotle's two ethical tracts.

In the *Eudemian Ethics* at the beginning of book II we read :

Now all goods are either external or within the spirit, and of these two kinds the latter are preferable, as we class them even in the extraneous discourses.¹⁸⁶

Earlier in book I of the same work we read :

But if we are to speak about it concisely, we say that in the first place to assert the existence of a Form not only of good but of anything else is an expression of logic and a mere abstraction (but this has been considered in various ways both in extraneous discourses and in those on philosophical lines) ;¹⁸⁶

Here we are moving close to the heart of the matter ; for in both the passages 'extraneous discourses' is the translator's rendering of the Greek phrase *exoterikoi logoi*. Light is thrown on the meaning of the phrase in the context by the opening passage of sec. viii, book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, a passage which parallels the passage from book II of the *Eudemian Ethics* quoted above. Here, talking of testing the definition of Happiness Aristotle writes :

Accordingly we must examine our first principle not only as a logical conclusion deduced from certain premises but also in the light of the current opinions on the subject.¹⁸⁷

There is a clear juxtaposition here between 'logical conclusion' and 'current opinions'. Now, this passage is followed closely by a passage on the division of the goods into external and of the soul, a subject to which the passage in book II of the *Eudemian Ethics* is also devoted. In book I of the *Eudemian Ethics* we have already encountered the same juxtaposition between 'expression of logic' and *exoterikoi logoi*. Thus *exoterikoi logoi* here seems to mean popular notions without the severe discipline of a strictly logical structure. This is the meaning which the parallel passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics* suggests. Of particular interest in this context is the use of the Greek phrase in book VII of the *Politics* :

Believing therefore in the adequacy of much of what is said even in extraneous discourses on the subject of the best life, let us make use of these pronouncements now. For as regards at all events one classification of things good, putting them in three groups, external goods, goods of the soul and goods of the body, assuredly no body would deny that the ideally happy are bound to possess all three.¹⁸⁸

'Extraneous discourses' here is of course a translation of the Greek *exoterikoi logoi*. Obviously, the *Politics* are not 'extraneous discourses' as the word 'even' suggests in the context. Secondly, the use of the word 'even' further suggests the same kind of contrast between strictly logical or philosophical treatises on the one hand, and the *exoterikoi logoi* on the other as one finds in the two works on ethics, quoted earlier. And, finally, the reference to the 'classification of things' in the second sentence of the passage just quoted suggests some kind of a written work and not merely currently held opinion or oral discourses. The evidence here should, of course, be taken as suggestive rather than as conclusive.¹³⁹ In book III of the same work Aristotle refers to his own discourses in the same manner :

And again, the several recognized varieties of government can easily be defined ; in fact we frequently discuss them in our external discourses.¹⁴⁰

It is tempting to take this as a reference to his own oral discourses ; but, again, the evidence should be taken as indicative or suggestive, rather than as conclusive. For, 'discuss' here is the translator's rendering of the greek word *diorizometha*, *diorizo* in Greek meaning 'to lay down' 'to define', 'to discriminate', 'to set the limits of', etc. And also we must weigh against our temptation Aristotle's habit of quoting from the written works of other authors, and indeed from his own, using the same word.¹⁴¹ Again, there is the passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, already quoted, on the distinction between things made, *poieta*, and things done, *prakton* : 'But making is different from doing a distinction we may accept from extraneous discourses [*exoterikoi logoi*].'¹⁴² It seems Aristotle is referring here to some written accounts, and not merely to some lectures or to popular opinion ; for it is highly unlikely that such a corner-stone of Aristotelian philosophy as the distinction between *praxis* and *poesis* was a matter of common conversation among the well-educated. In the same work elsewhere, the reference clearly seems to be to written works, perhaps by Aristotle himself :

Now on the subject of psychology some of the teaching current in extraneous discourses [*exoterikoi logoi*] is satisfactory and may be adopted here : ¹⁴³

In the *Metaphysics* XIII in the Loeb translation we read : '...most of the arguments have been made familiar already by the criticisms of other thinkers.'¹⁴⁴ As the translation here is less than satisfactory for our purpose, the translation of this passage in the Oxford Translations is being given side by side : 'for most of what we have to say has been repeatedly stated popular works'.¹⁴⁵ The 'popular works' of the Oxford

translator, who, incidentally, is Ross himself and 'criticisms of other thinkers' of the Loeb translator are, of course, renderings of the Greek phrase '*exoterikon logon*'. Again, the reference here seems to be to written works, an interpretation which obviously, has been accepted by Ross without reservation. The Loeb translator has been rash with his 'other thinkers': for the phrase *exoterikon logon* leaves it unstated here whether the discourse is by Aristotle himself, or by others. Zeller holds that the reference here must be to a work of Aristotle himself, otherwise he could not have taken a fuller discussion of the doctrine of ideas for granted.

The use of the word 'exoteric' in Aristotle has been analysed, and it has been found that the word has two broad meanings in Aristotle (i) that which *exists* outside, the external; and (ii) that which *goes out*, refers to the external.¹⁴⁶ The question is, however, about the meaning of the word in the phrase *exoterikoi logoi*.

In the passage quoted from book I, sec. ii of the *Politics*, Aristotle seems to have used the word *exoterikoteras* in the first of the two senses given above. The phrase *exothern logoi* in the quotation given earlier from book II, sec. ii of the *Politics* has also, roughly, the same general sense. The same could be said of the use of the phrase in passage given from the *Physics* where a distinction has been drawn between 'general reflections' and a discussion proper. But in most of the other quotations given above, there is an implied suggestion that there are two kinds of discourses, exoteric and non-exoteric. In the passage from book I of the *Eudemian Ethics*, the contrast, not implied but explicit, is between logical or scientific discourses and exoteric discourses. If we accept the non-exoteric treatises as academic writings in strict logical structure, the *exoterikoi logoi* can only mean popular writings. In this sense, the word *exoterik* in the phrase *exoterikoi logoi* in the passages under review can be taken to have been used in the second of the two meanings given above, signifying works intended for *outsiders, going out* of the school for the use of the public at large.

In Aristotle himself, then, we find this contrast between 'exoteric' and 'non-exoteric' writings firmly established. There are numerous references in Aristotle to a class of writing which he calls 'published treatises', *ekdedomenoi logoi*. For example, he says at the end of ch. XV of the *Poetics*: 'But of this enough has been said in our published treatises',¹⁴⁷ implying, it seems, that the *Poetics* as we know it or as Aristotle left it was not meant to be published.

The division of the Aristotelian *Corpus* itself into two classes of writings, exoteric and non-exoteric became established quite early, the

non-exoteric writings being the technical, academic treatises, and the 'exoteric' being those which are less rigorous in their treatment of subjects. There is a near-unanimity among the ancients on this point. Coming to the late Byzantine period only, we meet with two exceptions. Eustratius (C.A.D. 1100) understands by the phrase *exoterikoi logoi* 'common opinion', and Pseudo-Ammonius (Heliodorus X, C.A.D. 1367) understands the phrase to mean oral instruction. But to go back to the ancients, we have already come across Strabo on 'exoteric discourses'. Clearly, the phrase meant for Strabo the non-philosophic, non-scientific writings; because though these existed, it is because of the non-availability of the philosophic writings that the older peripatetics could not philosophise properly. Cicero in the *De Finibus* says:

Their [of Aristotle and Theophrastus] books on the subject of Chief Good fall into two classes, one popular in style, and this class they used to call their *exoteric* works; the other more carefully wrought.¹⁴⁸

In contradistinction to the 'exoteric' writings, Cicero in this passage calls the scientific writings *Commentarii*, i.e., continuous expositions, translated as 'carefully wrought' in the Loeb edition. It is clear from a passage in his *Letters to Atticus* that Cicero has especially the Dialogues in mind when using the term 'exoteric'. Speaking of the style and form of his own Dialogues, Cicero says: 'I am giving an introduction to each book, as Aristotle does in the work he called the *Exoterics*'.¹⁴⁹ Plutarch also has the Dialogues in mind when he writes:

Now as to the ideas,—for which he quarrels with Plato,—Aristotle, by moving this matter at every turn, and alleging all manner of doubts concerning them, in his Ethics, in his Physics, and in his Exoterical Dialogues, seems to some rather obstinately than philosophically to have disputed against these doctrines,.....¹⁵⁰

Gellius uses two terms, 'acroatic' and 'exoteric' in his classification of Aristotle's works:

The philosopher Aristotle, the teacher of King Alexander, is said to have had two forms of the lectures and instructions which he delivered to his pupils. One of these was the kind called *exoterika*, or "exoteric", the other *akroatika*, or "acroatic." Those were called "exoteric" which gave training in rhetorical exercises, logical subtlety, and acquaintance with politics; those were called "acroatic" in which a more profound and recondite philosophy was discussed, which related to the contemplation of nature or dialectic discussions. To the practice of the "acroatic" training which I have mentioned he devoted the

morning hours in the Lyceum, and he did not ordinarily admit any pupil to it until he had tested his ability, his elementary knowledge, and his zeal and devotion to study. The exoteric lectures and exercises in speaking he held at the same place in the evening and opened them generally to young men without distinction. ¹⁵¹

This division of Aristotle's writings into two classes, 'acroatic' or 'acroamatic' and 'exoteric', one for the general public and the other for the master's scholars, is well-established among the late Alexandrian commentators, such as Simplicius and Philoponus¹⁵², as also earlier in Galen (A.D. 129-199)¹⁵³, who explains that the exoteric texts were meant for the public and the 'acroatic' texts only for the master's own scholars. Gellius quotes from Andronicus of Rhodes the famous correspondence between Alexander and Aristotle. Whatever the authenticity of these letters, judging by the fact that they have been quoted by Plutarch and Simplicius, they seem to have been accepted as an integral part of the Aristotelian tradition. Thus Gellius :

I have added copies of both letters, taken from the book of the philosopher Andronicus. I was particularly charmed with the slender thread of elegant brevity in the letter of each.

"Alexander to Aristotle, Greeting".

"You have not done right in publishing your acroatic lectures; for wherein, pray, shall I differ from other men, if these lectures, by which I was instructed, become the common property of all? As for me, I should wish to excel in acquaintance with what is noblest, rather than in power. Farewell.

"Aristotle to King Alexander, Greeting".

"You have written to me regarding my acroatic lectures, thinking that I ought to have kept them secret. Know then that they have both been made public and not made public. For they are intelligible only to those who have heard me. Farewell, King Alexander." ¹⁵⁴

Plutarch in his life of Alexander repeats the story, quotes the same letter from Alexander to Aristotle, and summarises Aristotle's reply. He introduces the anecdote thus :

It would appear...that Alexander not only received from his master his ethical and political doctrines, but also participated in those secret and more profound teachings which philosophers designate by the special terms "acroamatic" and "epoptic", and do not impart to many. For after he had crossed into Asia, and

when he learned that certain treatises on these recondite matters had been published in books by Aristotle, he wrote him a letter on behalf of philosophy, and put it in plain language. ¹⁵⁵

Then follow the letter itself and a summary of Aristotle's reply which we have already come across in the original in Gellius. A disturbing suggestion is implied in the last two quotations: that Aristotle deliberately kept a certain part on his teaching secret. Plutarch's gloss on Aristotle's reply is important in this connection: 'for in truth his treatise on metaphysics is of no use for those who would either teach or learn the science, but is written as a memorandum for those already trained therein.'

Most of the early commentators agree, however, that the 'exoteric' writings are those which, couched in a popular style, were intended for the general public, and the 'acroatic' writings are those which were written in a more severe style and constructed along strictly logical lines. ¹⁵⁶ In Aristotle scholarship this division can almost certainly be traced as far back as Andronicus of Rhodes, the source of the two letters for Gellius which Plutarch also quotes. Thus a continuity of this tradition in Aristotle scholarship can be traced from Andronicus through Cicero, Strabo, Plutarch right down to the later commentators and even to the Middle Ages and St. Thomas. ¹⁵⁷ And, as has already been seen, the origin of it all can be discovered in Aristotle himself.

The precise meaning of these terms and their significance have been the subjects of endless dispute, and a whole body of scholarly literature originating, as Grant points out, ¹⁵⁸ with Octavianus Ferrarius in 1575, has sprung up around them in modern times. The five great 19th century landmarks here are Bernays, Spengel, Grote, Grant, and Zeller. The present writer has not come across any recent work which seriously questions or adds anything new to Zeller's final summing up of the discussion which began with Bernays in 1863. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the opinions of these scholars. We shall therefore have to be satisfied with a summary of the views of each, i.e., of Grote, Grant, and Zeller. According to Grote the phrase *exoterikoi logoi* in Aristotle himself means merely a particular approach, not any particular class of writing 'a dialectic process of turning over and criticizing diverse opinions and probabilities.' Incidentally, Zeller originally held that 'exoteric discourses' meant not any writings at all, but the conversations and discourses of cultivated men, a view he rejected later. Grote interprets the use of the phrase in Aristotle scholarship, that is, the meaning of the phrase as it has been used by Cicero onwards, as meaning popular writings as opposed to strictly philosophical writings.

Grote dismisses the idea that Aristotle promulgated a public as opposed to a mystic or secret doctrine. Hence, he maintains, *exoteric* and *esoteric* are not correctly opposed terms. The term *esoteric*, he goes on to add, might have some relevance with reference to the doctrines of Pythagoras, or even to Plato, but in Aristotle *exoteric* does not mean any doctrine, but a way of discussing things.

Grant, agreeing with Grote, points out that *exoterikoi logoi* cannot be exclusively identified with Aristotle's lost Dialogues, as Bernays did. The writers of the later empire, accustomed to the idea of mystical and hierophantic teachings as professed by the neo-Platonists and the neo-Pythagoreans, misconstrued the meaning of the term *exoteric* and created the fable of an *esoteric* doctrine of Aristotle. The theory has not been taken seriously since the Renaissance. Grant's conclusion is that *exoteric* means 'external' non-philosophical, non-scientific treatment of a subject, opposed to...internal, appropriate, and scientific treatment of it.¹⁵⁹ 'Grant points out that Aristotle himself uses the term in three different senses, one of them being 'popular' as opposed to 'philosophical' discussion.

Zeller also accepts the view that the term *exoteric*, as used by the early scholars and sometimes even by Aristotle himself, means popular works, as opposed to scientific works. However, Zeller points out, Aristotle did not mean all his writings to be published; some of his writings were meant primarily for the use of the scholars of the school as class texts. In other words, Zeller finds the accounts given by Gellius, Galen, and Plutarch fully acceptable. And, Aristotle adorned only the published works with a literary style, so much praised by Cicero and Quintillian. Zeller summarily dismisses the theory of a secret doctrine in Aristotle. To Zeller, 'published works' and *exoterikoi logoi* are synonymous expressions. Zeller explains the system of cross-references in Aristotle, particularly the confusing instances of two works quoting each other, by the hypothesis that none of the works was published in a final shape and hence could be added to as occasions arose,

We have Aristotle's own words to support the view that at least some of the works were meant for his students primarily. The closing words of the *Topica* consist of a series of advice, obviously meant for his students.¹⁶⁰ At the end of the *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, Aristotle, after apologizing for the inherent limitations of a work which is breaking an entirely new ground, thanks his listeners and students ;

If, then, it seems to you after inspection that, such being the situation as it existed at the start, our investigation is in a satisfactory condition compared with the other enquiries that have

been developed by tradition, there must remain for all of you, or for our students, the task of extending us your pardon for the shortcomings of the enquiry, and for the discoveries thereof your warm thanks.¹⁶¹

There is no reason to think that the *Topica* and the companion work *De Sophisticis Elenchis* could have been merely lecture notes for the master's own use. Zeller points out that there is an implied address to the readers in addition to the address to the listeners in the passage last quoted.¹⁶² Besides, Aristotle himself refers to the *Topica* frequently in his later works; yet, the wording of the concluding peroration is such that it would be out of place in a work arranged for publication by the author himself. Thus it acquired the status of a work which was not actually published, but was in use nevertheless as a separate work. In use among whom?—his students no doubt. The book V of the *Metaphysics*, a glossary of words without a beginning or an end, could never have been published by Aristotle in its present form; yet Aristotle frequently refers to it in his other works. Hence it could only have been some notes circulated by Aristotle among his students. It is now agreed by Aristotle scholars that the *De Anima* was meant for the students of Aristotle.

An interesting clue is provided by these undoubtedly unpublished works; for, works which quote or refer to these unpublished works must have been unpublished works themselves. And this net-work of such cross-references cover almost the whole of the extant *Corpus*.

We said just now that the *Topica* could not have been the master's lecture notes. This brings us to a theory which deserves a discussion here. This theory holds that the unintelligibility of some of the extant writings of Aristotle may be due to the fact that they are hypomnematic, i.e., lecture notes for his personal use. A few of the extant works may indeed have been lecture notes, e.g., the *Anatomy*, and Bk XII of the *Metaphysics*. But this could not have been true of the majority of the writings. Apart from anything else, the style of writing employed in these treatises precludes such a possibility. The cross-references in the majority of the writings cover a range of courses so widely divergent in date that they could only have been of help to the students when actually available to them for consultation in a written down form. Besides, in many cases, in the *Natural Philosophy* for example, the treatment of the subject-matter is too detailed for the purpose of oral teaching. Finally, we have the evidence, already referred to, of Eudemus asking Theophrastus for the correct wordings of a passage in the *Physics*. If the *Physics* was written down, why not the other

treatises? We also know that Theophrastus and Eudemus reproduced *verbatim* several passages of the *Metaphysics*. Eudemus also treated the *Ethics* in the same manner. All this seems to confirm the 'written memoranda' theory.

Another theory, propounded by Oncken¹⁶³ which must be considered dead is that the whole or a great part of the extant *Corpus* consists of students' notes of the master's lectures. It is a comfortable theory which would explain many of the shortcomings of the existing texts. Yet, the majority of such defects are really stylistic peculiarities common to all the works, and hence should be ascribed to Aristotle himself.¹⁶⁴ It should be pointed out, however, that at least one leading modern expert on the *Poetics* is in favour of accepting the two variants of the 'note theory', mentioned above.¹⁶⁵ Another fanciful theory sees such works as abstract made by some student of the Alexandrian age who combined together different works, sometimes by different people.¹⁶⁶ It has long been recognised that the extant texts of Aristotle may represent so many layers of revisions, additions, and editing that what we have now may not at all be what Aristotle actually wrote.¹⁶⁷ This is certainly one way of doing away with the whole problem altogether. Another equally effective way of doing the same service to Aristotle scholarship has been tried by an ingenious modern scholar who, on the basis of a close study of the texts and their stylistic and linguistic peculiarities, has come to the conclusion that the extant texts were written by Theophrastus in fact, and not by Aristotle at all.¹⁶⁸ However, instead of engaging in the no doubt useful task of peeling the Aristotelian onion to find out the *real* Aristotle, let us proceed for the time being at any rate, on the assumption that despite all defects what we have now is substantially what Aristotle wrote.

Now, where does the *Poetics* fit into all this? The first question we must answer is whether the *Poetics* is an exoteric discourse i.e., a published discourse in the popular style which is worthy of Cicero's phrase, 'the golden stream of eloquence'. The answer to this must be a straight 'no'. The style of the *Poetics* is so crabbed, bald, and unornamented, that it cannot be considered an example of what Cicero and Quintillian had in mind. Besides, if with Zeller we equate *exoterikoi* with *ekdedomenoi* 'published', the text of the *Poetics* excludes itself from this category of writings: for Aristotle says at the end of ch. XV of the *Poetics* *apropos* of strictly poetic rules to be observed by the tragic poet: 'But of this enough has been said in our published treatises,' implying thereby that the *Poetics* is not a published work, *ekdedomenoi logoi*.

Lastly, the question whether we should take the text of the *Poetics* as 'hypomnematic'. Apart from the style of the work which makes the 'note theory' highly improbable in this particular case, the many references to the *Poetics* in the *Rhetoric* as a separate work practically rule out any such possibility. There is no need to discuss in detail the applicability of the other variants of the 'note theory' to the *Poetics*.

The paper may be brought to a close with a brief summary of the findings given so far. The *Poetics*, then, is a work common to both the Alexandrian and the post-Andronican tradition of the texts of Aristotle. An 'acroatic' and unpublished tract, not a 'hypomnematic' or an 'exoteric work', it was written during Aristotle's second Athenian period. It came after the *Politics* VIII and before the *Rhetoric*. Originally the text must have been longer than what we now possess. It is the sole surviving example of a whole group of writings devoted by Aristotle to the study of the 'creative sciences' as he calls them.

This brief survey of the history of the Aristotelian *Corpus* in Antiquity with a special emphasis on the position of the *Poetics vis a vis* the *Corpus* as a whole provides us with a take-off point for a consideration of the history of the treatise in the Middle Ages. This essay, therefore, may be taken as the first part of a projected two-part study of the history of the *Poetics* upto the Renaissance.

NOTES

(At least one of the places of publication, unless otherwise mentioned, is London)

1. G.E.R. Lloyd, *Aristotle : The Growth and Structure of His Thought*, Cambridge, 1968, I, i, gives a brief and useful survey of some of the ground covered in this article.
2. For a discussion of the old accounts of Aristotle's life, see E. Zeller, *Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics*, tr. B.F.C. Costelloe & J.H. Muirhead, 1897, 2 vols, (henceforward referred to as Zeller), I, p. 2, n. 1. Of the six extant old accounts of Aristotle's life, one in three rescensions, the biography by Diogenes Laertius, the most copious of them all, and the smaller accounts given by *The Anonymous Menagii* and *Pseudo-Ammonius*, printed in G. Gabriel Cobet, *Diogenes Laertii de Clarorum Philosophorum* etc., Paris, 1850, Appendix by Westermann, pp. 10-14 are available at the National Library, Calcutta (henceforward referred to as the N. L.). For sheer weight of documentation and organized presentation of data, Zeller on the subject in hand remains unsurpassed. W.D. Ross, *Aristotle*, 1953 repr. (henceforward referred to as Ross) is a brief and convenient introduction to the subject, incorporating as it does the advances made by twentieth century scholarship on Zeller. Naturally, the exhaustiveness of Zeller is beyond the scope of its two brief introductory chapters. Of the important 19th century works on Aristotle's life and works, G. Grote, *Aristotle*, ed. A. Bain, tr. G.C. Robertson, 2 vols, 1872 (henceforward referred to as Grote) ; Sir Alexander

Grant, *Aristotle*, 1910 and *idem*, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, 2 vols, 1874 (henceforward referred to as Grant, *Ethics*) are available at the N.L. and have been found most useful. Very many important works of 19th century German scholarship viz. Rose, Susemihl, Stahr, Brandis, Heitz, and others are not available at the N.L. It is shocking to find that the great Berlin edition (Bekker) of Aristotle's works is not at the N. L. either, nor does the N. L. possess the Aristotelian *Fragments* in any edition whatsoever (see n. 34 *infra*). In respect of the works of 19th century German scholarship mentioned above, one should add that as Zeller in many respects can be said to have superseded them and as Zeller with meticulous care indicates at every step his agreement or disagreement with the earlier scholars, one can carry along without floundering too much. This is not to say that this is a desirable or satisfactory way of performing a scholarly task. It is frustrating to find J. W. Blakesley, *A Life of Aristotle*, Cambridge, 1839, and Ingemar Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, LXIII, 2, Göteborg, absent from the N. L. Catalogue. After Zeller the most important landmark in Aristotle scholarship is W. Jaeger, *Aristotle*, tr. R. Robinson, 2nd ed. (1948), Oxford, (1960 repr.) who may be said to have given a new direction to Aristotle scholarship. The recent trend in Aristotle scholarship, however, is a swing away from Jaeger (see *infra* n. 109). In this connection see also J. H. Randall, *Aristotle*, N. Y. 1960, ch. II: 'Aristotle's Life and Corpus'

3. It is interesting to note that Aristotle himself never mentions the Academy or that he ever studied in it. This is, however, not to deny the influence of Platonism on early Aristotle. See J. H. Randall, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
4. Zeller, I, p. 19.
5. *Ibid*, I, p. 25.
6. See *Ibid*, I, p. 27. n. 2, on 'the derivation of the word 'Peripatetic'. The most generally held view is that the word is derived from Aristotle's custom of strolling up and down in the covered loggia of the gymnasium attached to the lyceum, i.e., a temple of Apollo Lykeios, while lecturing to his students Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 3 vols, Loeb, tr. J.C. Rolfe, 1927-28, XX,v, 5-6, says that Aristotle lectured to his students in the morning and in the evening, calling his lectures '*dellinos peripatos*, "the evening walk"—the other, *eothinos* or the "morning walk"; for on both occasions he walked as he spoke.' Thus again Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Loeb, 2 vols, tr. R. D. Hicks, 1925, i, 17: 'Some schools [of philosophers] took their name from cities, as the Elians and the Megarians, the Eretrians and the Cyrenaics; others from localities, as the Academics and the stoics; others from incidental circumstances, as the Peripatetics.' 'Attention may be drawn to the phrase 'incidental circumstances' here, as different and separate from 'localities'. His authority, of course, is Hermippus whom Diogenes quotes later: 'Hermippus in his *Lives* mentions that he [Aristotle] was absent as Athenian envoy at the court of Philip when Xenocrates became the head of the Academy, and that on his return, when he saw the school under a new head, he made choice of a public walk in the Lyceum where he would walk up and down discussing philosophy with his pupils until it was time to rub themselves with oil. Hence the name "Peripatetic". But others say that it was given to him because when Alexander was recovering from an illness and taking daily walks, Aristotle joined him and talked with him on certain matters.' (*Ibid*, V, 2). There is another

view which holds that the word 'peripatetic' is derived from the 'Peripatos' of the Lyceum, the meeting place of the school. In Liddell and Scott (q. V.) the three meanings of the word 'Peripatos' are: (i) a walking about, walking; (ii) a place for walking, a covered walk; (iii) a discourse during a walk, a philosophical discussion. Most of the ancient authorities hold the first view, as also do Liddell and Scott (q. V.); Zeller, *loc. cit.*; Ross, p. 5; Grote, I, p. 10. Zeller points out (*loc. cit.* and I, p. 13, n. 3) that the use of the word 'Peripatetics' was not confined to the Aristotelians originally, and that it was only later that the word acquired a special meaning. By the time of Strabo, however, the word had acquired this special meaning (cf. *The Geography of Strabo*, Bohn's Classical Library, tr. with notes, H. C. Hamilton and W. Falconer, 1889-93, XIII, i, 54).

7. Gellius, *op. cit.*, XIII, v.
8. *Ed. cit.* and *The Geography of Strabo*, Loeb, 8 vols, tr. H. L. Jones, 1917-24.
9. Strabo, tr. Hamilton and Falconer, *ed. cit.*, 13 : 54.
10. See Zeller, I, p. 137, n. 1.
11. Strabo, *ed. cit.*, b. XII, ciii, 16, *fini*.
12. Plutarch, *The Life of Sulla*, xxvi *init*; vol. IV of *Plutarch's Lives*, Loeb (10 vols), 1916.
13. On Andronicus of Rhodes, see Zeller, I, p. 49; Grant, *Ethics.*, i, pp. 8-9, 12, 15-18; Grote, I, pp. 53 ff. I have greatly missed Zeller on Andronicus in his *Philosophy of the Greeks* which, unfortunately, is not available at the N. L.
14. Porphyry, 'The Life of Plotinus', 24, in *Plotinus: The Ethical Treatises*, tr. S. Mackenna, vol. I, The Library of Philosophical Translations, 1917.
15. Quoted Grant, *Ethics*, I, p. 8.
16. *Ibid*, I, p. 9.
17. Grote, I, p. 57.
18. D J. Allan. *The Philosophy of Aristotle*, 1952, p. 11.
19. Grote, I, p. 56. n. a.
20. Grant, *Aristotle*, *ed. cit.*, p. 40.
21. Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, 7 vols, Loeb, 1924-41, 214, d.e.
22. *Ibid*, 3b.
23. On Aristotle's Will see Zeller, I, p. 37, n. 4; Grant. *Aristotle*, *ed. cit.*, pp. 26-28. Zeller refutes Grant's argument that the Will could be spurious.
24. Zeller, I, pp. 137-40 accepts the story of Strabo upto this point.
25. For an account of scholarly doubts on the veracity of Strabo's account, see Zeller, I, p. 139, n. 1.
26. Grote, I, p. 52, n. a.
27. *Ibid*, I, p. 54.
28. *Loc. cit.* It is a great pity, Grote presents no evidence to support this assertion.
29. Grant. *Aristotle*, *ed. cit.*, p. 33.
30. Grant, *Ethics*, I, pp. 5 ff.
31. *Ibid*, I, p. 12.
32. Zeller, I, p. 141.
33. On Eudemus see Zeller, I, pp. 135-36, 143ff., 148; II, xix.
34. Both the letter of Eudemus and the reply from Theophrastus have been duly collected by the indefatigable V. Rose, *Fragmenta Aristotelis*. Unfortunately, these *Fragmenta* are not available at the N.L., either in Rose's original edition, or in the recent edition of Ross and Walzer (1955), or even in Oxford Translations (vol. XII).

35. For the whole discussion see Zeller, I, pp.145 ff.
36. See D.W. Lucas, *Aristotle: Poetics*, Oxford, 1968, p.x.
37. For the following discussion see Zeller, I, ii; Grant, *Ethics*, I, pp. 9ff.; Grote, I, ii.
38. Mentioned by Zeller, I, p.48,n.3 ; see also Ross, pp. 7 ff.
39. Ross, p.15.
40. Both are available together in *Fragments Aristotelis* edited by Rose and Heitz in the Berlin and Paris editions respectively of Aristotle's works, unfortunately not available in Calcutta. See note 34 *supra*.
41. On the works' in *Our Corpus Aristotelicum* mentioned in the catalogue of Diogenes Laertius, see Zeller, I, p.50,n.1.
42. See Zeller, I, p.51,n.4 ; Grote, I, p.41,n.a.
43. Diogenes Laertius, *ed.cit.*, V,21.
44. *Ibid.* I,1.
45. See Zeller, I, p.51.
46. Diogenes Laertius, *ed.cit.*, V,1,2.
47. Athenaeus, *ed.cit.*, xlii. 589c ; xv, 696f.
48. Grant, *Ethics*, I, pp.10 ff. Grote, I, pp.48 ff. On the reliability of the catalogues see Grant, *Ethics*, I, p.9 ff. Grant, however, is clearly in the wrong when he says that 'All the books mentioned in the Alexandrian catalogue are now lost ; only a few fragments of them have been preserved...' Zeller rightly points out the significance of the fact that some of our Aristotle are in fact in this catalogue as well.
49. Mentioned by D.W.Lucas, *op.cit.*, p.xiii, n.1. The work of Moraux which discusses the ancient catalogues of Aristotle's works, *Les Listes anciennes de ouvrages D'A.*, Louvain, 1951, is not available at the N.L.
50. Zeller, I, p.51,n.6.
51. The lists are in Rose.
52. Zeller, I, p. 52, n.2.
53. Grote, I, p. 60.
54. Grant, *Aristotle*, *ed. cit.*, p.39.
55. Grote, I,p. 40. n.b.
56. On the problem of the classification of the works of Aristotle, see Zeller, I, pp. 53 ff.; Grant, *Aristotle*, *ed. cit.*, pp. 42 ff.; Grote, I, pp.76-78 ; Ross, pp. 7ff.
57. Ross, pp. 7 ff. divides Aristotle's works into three broad groups : (i) popular writings ; (ii) notes for scientific writings ; and (iii) the scientific works themselves. Ross's classification of the works according to their subject matter (pp.9 ff.) is somewhat different from Zeller's.
58. See Zeller, I, pp.181 ff.
59. Diogenes Laertius, *ed.cit.*, V, 28. On other ancient authorities on this two-fold division of Aristotle's works see Zeller, I, p.181, n.1.
60. *Ibid.* I, p.181, n.2 & 3.
61. *On the Soul*, tr.W.S. Hett, Loeb, 1935, III, ix, 432b, 26 ; 433a, 3.
62. *Ibid.* III, x,433a, 10.
63. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, tr.H. Rackham, Loeb, 1926, VI, ii, 1-2.
64. *Politics*, tr.H. Rackham, Loeb, 1932, VII, xiii, 1333a, 25. For a discussion of this division in Aristotle between 'theoretic' and 'practical' philosophy. see Zeller, II, xi.

65. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. cit., I, i, 1-2.
66. *Ibid*, I, iii, 6-7.
67. *Ibid*, II, ii, *init*.
68. See *The Metaphysics : I-ix*, tr. H. Tredennick, Loeb, 1947, p. xxxi ; Zeller, I, p. 76, n.3 ; Jaeger, *op. cit* , p 169 ; Ross, p.13.
69. *The Metaphysics : I-ix*, ed. cit., II (a), i, 993b, 20.
70. See Zeller, I, p. 97, n.1 ; p.98, n.1. Modern scholarship, however, holds it to be genuine. See Ross, p.14
71. 'The Eudemian Ethics' in *Athenian Constitution, Eudemian Ethics, Virtues and Vices*, tr. H. Rackham, Loeb, 1935, I, i, 1214a, 10.
72. *The Metaphysics : I-ix*, ed. cit., VI, i, 1025b, 18.
73. *Ibid*, VI, ii, 1026b, 5-6.
74. 'Topica', in *Posterior Analytics, Topica*, tr. H. Tredennick & E.F. Forster, Loeb, 1960, VI, vi, 145a, 15.
75. *Ibid*, VIII, i, 157a, 10.
76. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. cit., VI, iii, 1139b, 15.
77. *Ibid*, VI, iv, *init*.
78. *The Metaphysics*, XII, ix, 1075a, 1, in *The Metaphysics X-XIV ; The Oeconomica, The Magna Moralia*, tr. H. Tredennick & G.C. Armstrong, Loeb, 1935.
79. *The Metaphysics, I-IX*, ed. cit., IX, ii, 1046b, 2.
80. For a discussion of this question, see Zeller, I, pp.181 ff.
81. See *Ibid*, I, p.183.
82. *The 'Art' of Rhetoric*, tr. J.H. Freese, Loeb, 1926, I, ii, 1356a, 25.
83. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. cit., I, ii, 6.
84. Zeller, I, pp. 154ff. See also Ross, pp. 17 ff.
85. See Zeller, I, p.154, n.4 ; p.155, n i
86. *Meteorologica*, tr. H.D.P. Lee, Loeb, 1952, I, vii, 345a, 1
87. *Politics*, ed. cit., V, x, 1311b, 1.
88. *Rhetoric*, ed. cit., II, 1399b, 12.
89. In *Philologus*, iv, 10 ff., referred to by Zeller, I, p 154, n.4. Unfortunately the journal is not available at the N.L.
90. 347 B.C. according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, latest ed.; according to other books of reference and the notes in the edition referred to here, he died in c 355 B.C.
91. *The Metaphysics*, ed. cit., I, ix, 991a, 1 ; XII, viii, 1073b, 17.
92. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. W.D. Ross, vol. IX of the Oxford Tr., VII, xiv, 1153b, 5 ; X, ii, *init*.
93. *Historia Animalum*, tr. D.W. Thompson, vol. IV of the Oxford Tr., II, v.
94. *Ibid*, VIII, ix.
95. Referred to by Zeller, I, p. 154, n.4.
96. *Categories*, tr. E.M. Edghill, vol. I of the Oxford Tr., iv, 2a ; ix, *fini*.
97. *Physica*, tr. R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gay, vol. II of the Oxford Tr., IV, xi, 219b, 20.
98. *Rhetoric*, Loeb ed. II, vii, 4 ; Oxford Tr., 1385a, 25. It should be mentioned, however, that Ross, p. 18, n.3. warns against treating these references as conclusive rather than as significant.
99. *Analytica Priora*, Tr. A. J. Jenkinson, vol. I of the Oxford Tr., II, 24 *init*.
100. *Physica*, ed. cit., III, iii, 202b, 10.

101. *Metaphysics I-IX*. ed. cit., V, v, init.
102. *Ibid*, V, xxiv, fini
103. *Ibid*, V, xxx, 1025a, 25.
104. *Rhetoric*, ed. cit., III, ii, 1404b, 4.
105. *Politics*. ed. cit., VII, xv, 1336b, 25.
106. Zeller, I. pp. 157 ff.
107. W. Jaeger, *Aristotle*, tr. R. Robinson, 2nd ed. (1948), Oxford, 1960 repr.
108. Ross, pp. 17ff ; p. 19, n. 2.
109. See G. E. R. Lloyd, *Aristotle: the Growth and Structure of his Thought*, Cambridge, 1968, pp. 19ff. ; J. H. Randall, *op. cit.*, ch ii ; Marjorie Grene, *A Portrait of Aristotle*, 1963, ch. i.
110. On the following discussion, see Zeller, I, p. 102, n. 1 ; D. W. Lucas, *op. cit.* pp. xii-xiv.
111. *Rhetoric*, ed. cit., I, xi, fini.
112. *Ibid*, III, i, fini.
113. *Ibid*, III, ii, 1404b, 2.
114. *Ibid*, III, ii, 1404b, 5.
115. *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, tr. and n., S. H. Butcher, 4th ed. Dover repr., 1951, xxi, 1457b, 2.
116. *Rhetoric*, III, ii, 1405a, 8.
117. *Ibid*, III, xviii, 1419b, 7.
118. *Politics*, ed. cit., VIII, vii, 4 (1341b, 35).
119. See Jaeger, *op. cit.*, pp. 263 ff. ; Ross, p. 19, n. 1.
120. See Zeller, I, p. 102, n. 2.
121. *Ibid*, loc. cit.
122. D. W. Lucas, *op. cit.*, p. xiv., The existence of a second book has been denied by A.P. McMohan, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, xxviii, (1914), pp. 1-46 (ref. D. W. Lucas, *op. cit.*, p. xiii, n. 2. The journal is not available at the N.L.)
123. For a discussion of this highly controversial subject, see Grote, I, pp. 62 ff. ; Grant, *Ethics*, Appendix I 'B' ('On the *exotericoi logoi*') ; Zeller, I, pp. 106 ff. ; G. E. R. Lloyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 9 ff.
124. 'sed dicendi quoque incredibili quadam eum copia tum etiam suavitate' : Cicero, *Top.* 13, quoted by Zeller, I, p. 106, n. 4. I have not been able to trace this work in English translation in the catalogue of the N. L.
125. Quoted by Zeller, loc. cit.
126. Cicero, *De Oratore*, tr. E. W. Sutton, and H. Rackham, 2 vols, Loeb, 1942, I, xi, 49.
127. Idem, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, tr. H. Rackham, Loeb, 1914, I, v, 14.
128. Idem, *Academica*, in *De Natura Deorum, Academica*, tr. H. Rackham, Loeb, 1933, II, xxxviii, 119.
129. Quintillian, *Instituto Oratoria*, tr. H. E. Butler, 4 vols, Loeb, 1921-22, X, i, 83.
130. Quoted by Zeller, loc. cit.
131. *Politics*, ed. cit., I, ii, 1254a, 30.
132. *Ibid*, II, ii, 1264b, 35.
133. *Physics*, tr. P. H. Wicksteed and F. M. Cornford, 2 vols, Loeb, 1924, 1934, IV, x, init. (217b, 30).
134. *The Eudemian Ethics*, ed. cit., II, i, 1 (1218b, 30)
135. *Ibid*, I, viii, 5-6 (1217b, 20).

136. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. cit., I, viii, *init.*
137. *Politics*, ed. cit., VII, I, 1323a, 20.
138. See Zeller, I, p. 115 n. 4 for a full discussion of the significance of this passage.
139. *Politics*, ed. cit., III, iv, 1278b, 30.
140. See Zeller, I, p. 116, n.
141. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. cit., VI, iv, *init.*
142. *Ibid*, I, xiii, 1102a, 25.
143. *Metaphysics X-XIV*, ed. cit., XIII, i, 1076a, 28.
144. *Metaphysics*. tr. W. D. Ross. vol. VIII of the Oxford tr., XIII, i, 1076a, 25.
145. See Grant, *Ethics*, ed. cit., I, p. 407 ; Zeller, I, p. 119, n. 1.
146. *Poetics*, ed. cit., XV, *fini.* (1454b,17). For a detailed discussion of the various interpretations of the Greek word *ekdedomenoi* see Zeller I, p. 108, n. 3.
147. *De Finibus*, ed. cit., V, v, *init* (12). For the division of Aristotle's works into two groups 'acroatic' or 'acroamatic' and 'exoteric' in Simplicius and Philoponus, see Zeller, I, p. 111, n. 4. See also Grote, I, p. 62, n. a on this passage, especially on Cicero's use of the words 'limiatus' and 'commentarii'.
148. Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, tr. E. O. Winstedt, Loeb, 3 vols, 1912, IV, xvi, 2.
149. Plutarch, 'Against Colotes the Epicurean', *Plutarch's Morals*, corr. and rev. W. W. Goodwin, intro. R. W. Emerson, 5 vols. 1870, vol. V, pp. 355-56.
150. Gellius, *Attic Nights*, ed. cit., XX, v.
151. See Zeller, I, p. 111, n. 4.
152. Quoted by Zeller, *loc. cit.* The text of Galen's *Natural Faculties* in the Loeb edition, the only edition available at the N. L., is complete only upto bk. III and does not contain the passage in question which occurs in bk. IV (758 k).
153. Gellius, *loc. cit.*
154. Plutarch, 'Life of Alexander', vii, 3-4, in *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. VII, tr. B. Perrin, Loeb, 1949.
155. See Zeller, I, p. 113, nn. 1, 2 and 3.
156. See Grote, I, p. 64.
157. Grant, *Ethics*, I, p. 397.
158. *Ibid*, I, p. 399.
159. *Topica*, ed. cit., 163b, 15 ff.
160. *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, tr. W. A. Pickard-Cambridge, vol. I of the Oxford Tr., XXXIV, *fini.*
161. Zeller, I, p. 128, n. 4.
162. *Ibid*, I, p. 133, n. 1.
163. *Ibid*, I, p. 134, n. 2.
164. Lane Cooper, *The Poetics of Aristotle: Its Meaning and Influence*; N. Y., 1956 repr, pp. 4-5.
165. *Ibid*, p. 5.
166. See besides Zeller, Grote, I, pp. 61-62 ; Grant, *Ethics*, I, pp. 17-18.
167. Joseph Zurcher, mentioned by Marjorie Grene, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

SHAKESPEARE AS TRANSLATED BY JOHANN GOTTFRIED HERDER

PRANAB GHOSH

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), the awakener of Goethe, was a theologian, a philosopher, an aesthete, a poet and a most gifted writer. He was conversant with all that was present and past, could see what was coming. He was a critic of his own time. Herder, the Max Mueller of the 18th century, had a genius for languages, and it is this particular aspect of Herder which we are going to examine in connection with his translation of Shakespeare in German.

It will not be out of place to mention here the influence of English actors and pre-Shakespearean playwrights and also of Shakespeare on the development of the German stage. In Italy the mimic actors had preserved through centuries the heritage of old times as theme and play. Only the low taste had to be elevated again to the literary and dramatic art. This happened in the 16th century in the big cities. Here in the humanistic dramas the actors found a repertoire of literary importance and their improved performances found audience and understanding. Their fame extended far beyond Italy. The Italian actors were invited to Vienna by the Kaiser, to Paris by the French King. They also visited Spain and England.

This leading position of Italy was soon taken over by England with the emergence of the great dramatic talents like Marlowe, Kyd, and Shakespeare. Stages and dramas found support in the whole range of society, from the ordinary citizen to the nobility and court. To quote Prof. Otto Mann : "The men showed that the drama is not in the first place a literary educational speech, rather a dramatic—theatrical embodiment of unusual effect, that one could visit a theatre not on account of education and social representation, rather on account of charms and violent emotions emanating from it. The Englishmen attained in drama what the Italians did through the opera. They revived in their own way the powers of action contained in the drama of old times. In drama and in dramatic art they pushed away the Italians from their leading position and took over around 1600 the leadership in Europe."

English troops now visited the continent. They played particularly in Germany since they had not had to compete there with their own

dramatic art. In addition to the Italians, the French men were also busy there, but more in the South and the West. In the North, people preferred the English art, to which one felt nearer through the spirit of Protestantism. The first English players on the continent played in Denmark, in the Royal Court in 1579 and in 1585/86. On the invitation of the Duke Heinrich Julius Von Braunschweig another English troop visited in 1592. Play-writing and acting as professions were in England a practical business activity through which one tried to earn whatever is best possible. So the best troops remained in England ; only the troops of second or still lower order went to foreign countries. They earned quite a good amount and returned being considerably rich. But gradually competition came in the field. With the victory of Puritanism in England and the suppression of theatre since 1642, the flow stopped, and those troops playing in Germany lost the chance of going back to their mother land. They were Germanised. Around 1660 there was no more any English troop in Germany.

The Englishmen gave with their drama also the English repertoire. However, the most modern pieces, the dramas of the blossoming period, remained as carefully guarded things only for the troops in England. With few exceptions, people played the pre-Shakespearean dramas of Peele, Greene, Marlowe, Kyd, but not their most mature works. In the first 30 years of the English play in Germany no works of Shakespeare, Massinger, Beaumont or Fletcher were performed. Upto 1626 only the early work of Shakespeare Titus Andronicus can be evidenced. In 1626 Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, King Lear and Julius Caesar were played in Dresden.

Christopher Martin Wieland translated between 1762 and 1766 the works of Shakespeare, of which 22 were in prose and one was in verse. It is in this translation that Herder, Goethe and Schiller read the works of Shakespeare for the first time.

The National Theatre of Germany was founded in 1767 in Hamburg. Lessing was invited there as a dramaturgist. In the field of German drama Lessing wanted to do away with the prevailing French model and introduced Shakespearean one for the German stage. Although Lessing had directed the attention of the Germans to the English dramatic talent, it was the highly gifted sensibility of Herder that made them aware of the unique creative power and greatness of Shakespeare. In other words, we can designate Herder as one of the "discoverers" of Shakespeare in Germany. He highly acclaimed Shakespeare as a model to be followed in play-writing. Thus we find that there was a general enthusiasm for Shakespeare long before Herder was born.

I shall divide my paper in four parts and shall try to develop them one by one and, as far as possible, with illustration.

Firstly, what did Herder translate from Shakespeare ?

Secondly, why did he translate those pieces ?

Thirdly, how did he translate ? Did he have any norm or any theory of translation ?

Lastly, did he conform to that norm and achieve any measure of success ?

Herder's translation of Shakespeare appears in the third book of his monumental work on folk song—*Die Stimmen der Voelker in Liedern* (The voices of the peoples in songs). Those are mainly songs, eight in number, appearing in six of Shakespeare's plays. I am giving an account of them.

Cymbeline—Act II. Sc. 3. Lines 18-26.

Hark, hark ! the lark at heaven's gate sings...

Act IV. Sc. 2. Lines 258-281.

Fear no more the heat o' the sun.....

As You Like It—Act II. Sc. 5. Lines 1-8.

Under the greenwood tree.....

Act. II. Sc. 7. Lines 174-183.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind.....

Measure For Measure—

Act. IV. Sc. 1. Lines 1-6.

Take, oh take those lips away.....

Twelfth Night—Act I. Sc. 1. Lines 1-15.

If music be the food of love.....

Act II. Sc. 4. Lines 51-66.

Come away, come away death.....

Othello—Act. IV. Sc. 3. Lines 11-107.

(Talk between Desdemona and Emilia.)

Act. V. Sc. 2. Lines 1-22.

(Desdemona in bed asleep. Othello enters.)

Hamlet—Act IV. Sc. 5. Lines 1-200. (Ophelia's songs)

Herder could have tried his hands at other works of Shakespeare having a greater dramatic effect. But Shakespeare as a lyric poet appealed to his mind no less. Being considerably influenced by Percy's *Reliques* and Macpherson's *Ossian*, he started collecting folk songs of almost all the nations of Europe. The folk songs contained a special significance for him. He saw in them tone, word and dance united in one. They blossomed in the early ages with the unsophisticated people and bore for every nation a testimony to their own feelings, impulses and their ways of looking at things (*Weltanschauung*). In language,

tone and content they mirror the way of thinking of the race or nation. He pointed out the difference of folk-poetry and literary poetry. He counted the works of Homer, the Hebraic poesy of the Bible, Ossian and the works of Shakespeare under this folk-poetry, especially the folk songs which express the poetic genius of a nation. It was Herder who coined the term *Volkslied* (folk song). Literary poetry came at a much later date with the advance of civilization. Taken in this light no one can overlook the importance of the songs of Shakespeare selected by Herder for his book. This is but the obvious reason. There is another consideration which, to my mind, is deeper than the first one. The literary world of the 18th century with its thirst for knowledge was permeated with two ideas. Firstly, it was gradually felt that in the western world, particularly in Europe, there is practically no closed door literature. The European literature forms a unity, a completeness. Secondly, unity can only be illustrated through translations of significant authors for the wider public and for the specialists. In these endeavours of the age of Enlightenment lie the roots of the words like 'Progressive universal poesy', the term given by F. Schlegel, and 'World literature', termed by Goethe and Herder. Herein lies also the reason for undertaking translations of all literatures. Nurtured in the traditions of Enlightenment Herder satisfied the demands of his age and those of his own.

Moreover, the experts say that in the plays of Shakespeare there are many allusions to the words of songs and ballads older than Shakespeare's time, and for many of these the music is extant. It is also conjectured that he supplied words to music already existing. We may thus see that since most of the songs of Shakespeare contained an element of folk song, Herder found it proper to include them in his collection of folk songs.

We come to the third point. Did Herder have any theory of translation according to which he translated those songs? Yes, he had a theory. It is this: the simple and almost mechanical faithfulness to letters and to form means little to him. What is more important to him is the faithfulness to the spirit of the original. By this he understands the language as a carrier of the various expressions of this spirit. And it is also a matter of faithfulness to form, which, to him, in addition to numerical and metrical form, is also sound, melody, rhythm and tone and therefore, organic form. Not only philological knowledge added to the above is necessary for a translator, rather artistic gift and, still more, a creative genius equal to that of the original author are necessary.

Since the achievement of such a standard is fairly impossible, there remains for Herder the only way out in artistic-philological translation,

He expects that the translation work at least extends beyond 'attempts', 'occupies as it were the whole life of a scholar', is in no way 'beautified', and above all becomes like the original itself, from thought content and expression of imagery up to the external form of the foreign sound. With these claims he associates the pure philological remarks and elucidations, but not an uninteresting trifle and he does so 'in a high critical spirit'. It has been his purpose to put before the reader, to whom the world of the original is foreign from the point of view of time, the period, the atmosphere, the spirit, in short the historical situation of the original. In this he seems to have been influenced by the German translation of the Sanskrit drama *Sakuntala* by George Forster. It is in this respect that Forster's translation went a step further than that of Sir William Jones.

We come to the last point. Did he achieve any measure of success? The sound-system of the various languages of the world are very different from one another. Even if one does not know a language, one can feel the beauty of it from sound itself. The present writer does not know French. But he had the occasion to spend about ten hours in a train with French schoolboys travelling from Frankfurt to Paris. The sweetness of spoken French, i.e. the sound-system even in commonplace talks, impressed him so much that he felt that he should have also learnt French. Because German, as spoken by a man on the street, is not as soothing as French.

Here I shall dilate a little on the nature of the German language—its strength and weakness. Nothing is mentioned so often against the German language as its consonantal richness, above all the innumerable sibilants, i.e. hissing sounds, whose four, five or six appearances in a word often make it difficult even for a German to pronounce it easily. The sound-system in German is also different from that of English. Schw- and pf at the beginning and dt, zt and ntgt at the end of a word fall heavy on the ear. But the heaviness of the sound-system may be an advantage elsewhere. Then comes the inclination of the Germans towards long and interwoven sentences. English is certainly free from such difficulties. Even after all these objections German is admittedly a language for philosophy and poetic art.

Since in a German poem the word-position is almost in no way put to a pressure, it is very fit for reproducing foreign lyric. It is this very characteristic which again and again attract the Germans towards translation work. The number of synonym is so large that even in the case of complicated verse structure not only the original rhythm is maintained, but also the position of the significant words in verse can also be pre-

served. Then comes the use of adjectives with inflection. If one looks to the paradigm one will find that the majority of them end with a nasal sound, some end with the vowel 'e'. The careful use of adjectives will also produce a musical effect. Another strength of the German language lies in forming compound words which mean more than the sum of the individual words.

Let us see how far Herder was successful as an actual translator. One should read out the original and the translation so that one may judge the sound effect, i.e. the organic form.

Cymbeline—Act II. Sc. 3. Lines 18-26. An antechamber adjoining Imogen's apartments. Enter magicians,

Song

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With every thing that pretty is,
My lady sweet arise:
Arise, arise.

Translation.

Horch, horch die Lerch' an Himmelstor singt;
Die liebe Sonn' wacht auf!
Von allen Blumenkelchen trinkt
Sie schon ihr Opfer auf.
Das Hochzeitknoepfchen freundlich winkt
Und thut sein' Aeuglein auf;
Was hold und lieb ist, lieblich blinkt,
Auf, schoenes Kind, wach' auf!

I think Herder has been able to maintain the same meter and rhyme scheme, though the lines do not end up with the same sound as in English. The highest technical art is shown in the way great poets vary the music of their verse by varying the feet they employ. In this respect Herder consistently followed Shakespeare.

Let us see whether he could convey the spirit of the original song. For 'Phoebus' he takes 'Sonne'—the sun. Lines 20 and 21, i. e. 'His steeds to water at those springs/On chaliced flowers that lies'; have been translated thus: Von allen Blumenkelchen trinkt/sie schon ihr Opfer auf. A literal translation in English will be—from all calyxes it drinks up its offering. He is obviously not far from the sense 'the sun drinks up the

dew lying in cup-shaped flowers'. Herder has not unnecessarily beautified his translation, against which he himself has warned.

Herder has excelled in his translation of Othello. Desdemona sleeps. Othello enters the room. We hear an agonising heart speak. These lines can be taken as one of the best examples of a translation where the translator does not take any liberty whatsoever, be it in the selection of words or in conveying the spirit of the original. I quote a few lines from his translation.

Liedchen der Desdemona

Act V. Sc. 2 lines 1—15

Desdemona schlaeft. Othello mit Licht und Schwert.

Ja es verdient's es verdient's, mein' Seel' I

Lasst mich's nicht nennen euch, ihr keuchen Sterne,

Verdient's I—Doch will ich nicht ihr Blut vergiessen,

Nicht rissen diese Haut so weiss wie Schnee,

So sanft wie'n Alabasterbild im Grabmal.

(Er legt das Schwert nieder)

Nur sterben muss sie, sonst betruengt sie mehr I

Thu aus das Licht I und dann—dann ? aus das Licht I

Loesch' ich dich aus, dienstbare Flamme, dir

Kann ich dein erstes Licht wohl wiedergeben,

Falla es mich reute. Aber dir I—Einmal

Dein Licht dir ausgethan, du kuenstlichste

Gestalt der Meisterin Natur, so weiss ich

Nicht, wo Prometheus Feuer ist, das dir

Dein Licht anzuende wieder—

(Er setzt das Licht nieder)

Hab' ich sie abgeplueckt die Rose, ich

Kann ihr nie Wuchs des Lebens wiedergeben.

Sie muss verwelken. Nun so will ich dich

Noch kosten auf dem Zweige. (Er kuesst sie.)

Herder always added footnotes to his translations in order to provide his readers with the atmosphere of the original. But in the case of Shakespeare's translation he, rightly enough, did not forget to add one thing. He adds that Shakespeare's songs are untranslatable.

I am also inclined to support the view. They are something more than mere 'attempts'. Herder has been quite successful in conveying the spirit of the original. The adept combination of vowels and consonants in words, the careful use of adjectives, predicatively and attributively, and maintaining the same meter and rhyme scheme of the original, i. e. the organic form, helped him considerably in bringing out the spirit of

the original. Even after all these the easy flow of Shakespeare's songs seems to be lacking in his translations. But Herder could not help. A translator is naturally limited to a narrow selection of words, if he is not to tamper with the original. No translation has been a work satisfactory in all respects. That is the reason why Hamlet has been translated more than 35 times in German and Goethe's Faust is still being translated in English. The great achievement of Herder, to my mind, lay in influencing the writers of the younger generation, especially Tieck and Schlegel, to take up the job of translating Shakespeare's works—still considered as standard ones in form and content. They form even to-day a repertoire for the German stage.

THE NATURALISTIC STAGE

N. K. BANERJEE

In the light of the increasing interest manifested in the conditions of production of Greek and Elizabethan Drama in this age, the importance of the contemporary stage for naturalistic drama will be readily admitted. What was demanded of such a stage as a place, physical, concrete, visible with settings, furniture and other accessories, with actors and their acting, lighting, costume, in fact with everything that works upon the senses, and what it had to give, are relevant for the assessment of naturalistic drama. Useful and illuminating as such knowledge of the inter-relation of stage and drama of any period, it is even more important for plays in which environment in the shape of material conditions has such an intimate bearing. Emile Zola has perhaps this in mind when he says, "since the theatre is a material reproduction of life, external surroundings have always been a necessity there," Aristotle too, though taking a somewhat restricted view had conceded that, "As they act the stories it follows that in the first place the Spectacle (or stage-appearance of the actors) must be some part of the whole."

A remarkable feature of the plays of the period is the wealth of information provided by the dramatists themselves as to the sensory effects they wish to produce by means of the resources of the contemporary stage, a fact which is patent from the explicit direction as to place, property, persons and time, and in which it is only rivalled by the descriptive urge in the novels of the day. The stage-directions of not only Pinero, Shaw and Barker but of such younger men as Harkin, Houghton and Elizabeth Baker are copious, precise, minute and thorough. However long, their worth has to be determined from their contribution to the dramatic effect of the plays in which they occur.

The mention or description of place in the stage-direction throws characters into some sort of spatial relation with the environment and it is worth examining if this has any dramatic significance. The stage direction of *Mary Broome* by Alan Monkhouse in Act I reads : "The drawing-room in a biggish suburban villa .." The scenes for Acts II & III remain the same, while that for Act IV is 'Rather poor lodgings.' This is not much more communicative than that of a Restoration comedy like *The Man of Mode* by Etherege whose four Acts are

placed respectively in a Dressing-room, Lady Townley's house, Lady Woodvil's lodgings and Lady Townley's Drawing-room. Yet the term 'suburban villa' at once projects the scene in time and social hierarchy. In Etherege's play, the dressing room is indeterminate and though the Title 'Lady' indicates social rank, its proper position in the gentlemanly class is not clear. The word 'lodgings' used by Monkhouse has a distinctly lower middle-class connotation which it certainly does not have in the other play. In view of the increasing practice of using interior scenes (though by no means absent in earlier drama) and of specifying them more and more particularly, its implication for the stage and drama requires further examination. Consider, for instance, such statements in the stage-directions of a few plays of the day :

"Great George Street, Westminster, is the address of Doyle and Broadbent, civil engineers. On the threshold one reads that the firm consists of Mr. Laurence Doyle and Mr. Thomas Broadbent, and that their rooms are on the first floor."

"The scene is triangular, representing a corner of the living room kitchen of no. 137, Burnley Road, Hindle, a house rented at about 7s. 6d. a week."

"Sitting-room at 55, Acacia Avenue."

In the three extracts above, the playwrights visualise their characters and have the stage confirm the impression in a way which makes the address important for the play's effect. Obviously intended for possible readers and producers, the information is not directly brought out on the stage nor elicited through dialogue. Yet the deliberate link-up of a locality, a street, the number of the house or the rental with the scene actually represented—an Office-room, a Kitchen or a Sitting room indicates, that those factors as part of a wider environment are thought to be as much a part of the condition of existence as the immediate surroundings. The address in the first of the extracts is of a firm of Civil Engineers and in a respectable locality. The detailed description of the reception-room which follows this extract relates the fixtures to the professional interest and standing of the owners. The total effect sought is one of 'bachelor untidiness and indifference, not want of means, for nothing that Doyle and Broadbent themselves have purchased is cheap ; nor is anything they want lacking.' Within the play itself, there are incidental allusions to their profession and to their prosperity, enough to corroborate the evidence of the eyes. In the other extracts, the mention of the house number makes the scene particular, individual, unique. The number is a way of indicating that just as it confers singularity and identity upon a house, so does it distinguish the people and their experience from

others. The directions following the last two differ from that of the first in seeking the illusion of a unique response, while Shaw is content with the typical features—professional stamp, bachelor impress and such like traits, for all his minute. To the distinction between the two, a Stage-direction of Barrie is particularly relevant :

“The scene is any Lawyer’s Office. It may be, and no doubt will be, the minute representation of some actual office, with all the characteristic appurtenances thereof, every blot of ink in its proper place ; but for the purpose in hand any bare room would do just as well.”

For Barrie’s purposes *any* Lawyer’s Office would do ; perhaps not even that, for he ends up by saying that ‘*any bare room*’ would serve as well. Yet, as a practising playwright he is aware that on the stage when the scene is represented, it would be modelled on the actual belongings of a Lawyer’s Office in real life. But so far as he is concerned it is immaterial. Evidently, he is unimpressed by such a meticulous duplication of actual things, and is dubious of ‘every blot of ink.’ The same supercilious disregard of ‘appurtenances thereof’ is apparent in *The Twelve Pound Look*. There, having decided that Harry Sims is ‘YOU’. (Barrie, J.N., *The Twelve Pound Look* : p. 763). He declares that the scene is laid in ‘your house’. He is prepared to redecorate the room rather than let the ‘you’ off on ‘a mere matter of plush and dadoes’. Even so, the admission that re-decoration to befit different persons and tastes implies acceptance of an inter-relation between persons and their surroundings. Nevertheless, Barrie’s assumption that whether he asked for it or not, the scene would be given the look of some actual Lawyer’s Office, indicates a resigned submission to a practice and mode of production current at the time to which he is neither opposed nor wedded. Indeed, in his very last play he makes a statement which throws further light on his attitude. He says :

‘All this calls for adroitness from stage experts that is beyond the author’s skill, who knows what he wants but not how to get it and has now given them enough to ponder :’

From the above it is to be seen that Barrie is inclined to think of and plan the background of his dramatic personae in terms of the stage. The demands that he is at times disposed to make upon the ‘stage experts’ such as, flying children, vanishing ladies, lagoons, islands, etc. among a variety of spectacular scenic effects, are indeed such as to require a great deal of skill and resourcefulness. It is a feat quite capable of drawing attention to itself by its very ‘adroitness’. A faithful reproduction of appearance of a room in actual life, be it a Lawyer’s Office, the

Drawing room of a successful businessman, or of an M.P., surely is not beyond the resources of such stage experts. This reluctance to exploit the stage effect of actual life scene in one, points unmistakeably to the acceptance of a frankly spectacular interest in the matter of stage production. Such an assumption is further substantiated by his enthusiasm and verve for any interior which promises to be interesting to the sight such as the drawing room at Laon House in Admiral Crichton or even humbler interiors such as the Shand sitting-room (in what Every Woman Knows), or Phoebe's Blue room (in Quality Street), Barrie's practice and attitude to stage production provide an extreme instance of a predominantly picturesque interest in scenic display, exteriors or interiors and assign reciprocity between character and environment a minor place. Since the capacity for display is an entirely extrinsic factor, its bearing on the dramatic effect of any play cannot be regarded as organic.

Unlike Barrie the stage directions of Pinero, Shaw and Barker lay down the specifications with exactness, and emphasise with no such marks of deference and diffidence towards 'stage experts' reflecting an altered view in the matter of those details of items so lightly disposed of by Barrie and of which the particularization of the address mentioned above is a symptom. The resources of the late Nineteenth Century Theatre in point of stage architecture and decor far beyond what drama of earlier periods could or did draw upon, are directed to ends which render the specification significant. Without altogether neglecting the appeal of diversification and massive build-up of scenes as any of the scenes from *His House In Order* of Pinero or Major Barbara of Shaw would bear out, the point lent to many of them by certain comments is of special interest. Consider the following statement which rounds off Pinero's direction for 'a library in a country mansion' in the play mentioned above :

"But, though there is evidence that the room is in use, everything appears to be strictly in its place."

The dramatist, it is to be inferred, not content only with the effect of respectable prosperity which such a scene would project, wants it to convey an orderliness and propriety which is to be gathered from its very appearance. Interesting as such a demand upon a scene, the importance of the impression is realised when in the course of the scene Filmer Jesson says :

"When I ask that my house shall be in order, I am asking, not only that my luncheon, my dinner, shall be decently and punctually served ; not only that this inkstand, this paper, knife, may be found invariably in the same place, but that every

wheel of the mechanism of my private affairs, however, minute, shall be duly oiled and preserved from grit."

From Filmer Jesson's remarks it is clear that Pinero has sought to draw attention to his passion for order objectively by means of visual effect of order and neatness. Considering how compelling this 'Order' is for this play, Pinero's desire to lend it visual corroboration not merely to the opening scene but even the drawing room whose far apart walls are parallel, whose chairs are 'stiff-looking' and which are placed at 'regular' intervals and in which even the Newspapers lie 'neatly folded and arranged', takes the stage beyond merely the decorative phase. The same attitude to staging leads him in *The Thunderbolt* to demand such effects as,

"The architecture, decorations and furniture are pseudoartistic and vulgar. The whole suggests the home of a common person of moderate means who has built himself a 'fine house'."

Or again, such an effect as,

"The room and everything in the room are eloquent of narrow means if not of actual poverty. But the way in which the arrangement about the room, give evidence of taste and refinement."

The requirement put forth in such statements reflects the use of the available resources of the stage to convey visible evidence of the culture and quality of the people who live in such surroundings. Indeed, how often such a connection is made and developed in various ways constitute an approach of outstanding interest for the plays of other dramatists. Thus, Bernard Shaw, speaking of Roebuck Ramsden's study in *Man and Superman*, declares at the outset :

"The study, handsomely and solidly furnished, proclaims the man of means."

Characterising the play as a 'drama of ideas', he proceeds to give a graphic representation of the intellectual interests of Ramsden by means of busts, photographs and prints which reflect his taste and ideas. Not only are such objects in addition to the furniture and drapings, their use by Shaw is symptomatic of the increasing importance attached to a detailed rendering of material conditions. Maugham is among those who has utilised the existing theatre to extract special visual effects for dramatic purposes. Consider the opening direction to *The Circle* :

"The scene is a stately drawing room at Aston Adey, with fine pictures on the walls and Georgian Furniture. Aston Adey has been described, with many illustrations in *Country Life*. It is not a house, but a palace. Its owner takes a great pride in it, and there is nothing in the room which is not of the period.

Without going into the details of the scene as Pinero and Shaw Love to do, Maugham is content to leave them, as Barrie would have done in resignation, to stage experts. He has not, however, thereby either ignored the importance of the scenic effect or conceded its designing to them. For all his brevity he has made an exacting demand by asking for 'Georgian' furniture and in further requiring that it should have nothing 'which is not of the period'. He has also drawn attention to the status of the building by characterising it as a 'palace' and not just a 'house' whose prestige is vindicated by its picture in a periodical of some local consequence. In the play the interesting diversion upon the 'Sheraton' chair refers the mind back to the style of the surrounding furniture. The tremendous significance of the scenic effect is brought home even more powerfully when it is seen how the style of the furniture and the prestige of the place induce in Arnold Champion-Cheney a frame of mind which becomes an important ingredient of the drama.

Yet another Maugham stage direction, that of *Our Betters*, reveals how, without inhibiting the delights of the spectacular and the decorative, the stage is being made to heighten the dramatic impact of the play. It reads :

"The Drawing room at Lady Grayston's house in Grosvenor Street, Mayfair. It is a sumptuous double room, of the period of George II, decorated in green and gold, with coromandel screen and lacquer cabinets ; but the coverings of the chairs, the sofas and cushions show the influence of Bakst and the Russian Ballet ; they offer an agreeable mixture of rich plum, emerald greens, canary and ultramarines. On the floor is a Chinese Carpet, and here and there are pieces of Ming pottery.

In contrast to the almost ascetic purity of the late XVIII Century architecture and furniture of the former scene from the address in Mayfair, the expansiveness of the room, the gay and playful colourfulness of the furnishing, to the oriental riches of carpet and pottery, the place exudes luxuriance. The over all effect of the scene is of a basic simplicity of design being superimposed and swamped by diffused lights and soft outlines. The details, with no pretence to exhaustiveness or unnecessary diffidence, are so chosen as to serve as a source of enlightenment to the rank, wealth, taste and even character of frequenters of the scene. Taken together, these features build up a scene charged with a sinister atmosphere as a result of the association of people of a certain kind. Maugham in providing a corroboration of the fact makes one character, a comparative outsider, Fleming exclaim :

"There's something in these surroundings which makes me terribly uncomfortable. Under the brilliant surface I suspect all kinds of ugly and shameful secrets that everyone knows and pretends not to."

The speaker is aware of the presence of a 'something' in the very 'surroundings' which makes him feel uneasy. The obvious circumstances of life in this set, which go to build up the public image of this society, the 'surface' is fascinating by virtue of their brilliance. That 'something' is the atmosphere which envelops and permeates these people. The physical sensations of colour—'emerald greens, canary and ultramarines', and of touch the inviting and yielding softness of cushions, sofas and carpets, combine to produce a psychological image of rank, prurient life. It is evident from Maugham's approach to the contemporary stage that even while making his submission to the theatre of spectacle like his forbears, his sensory and psychological link-up of spectacle and drama in his plays constitutes yet another mode of presenting upon the stage the naturalistic causality between character and environment.

The stage of Granville Barker demands careful consideration because it embodies the concept of staging of one actively associated with production of contemporary plays. The following extracts from his stage-direction in *The Voysey Inheritance* provide interesting clues :

"The Voysey dining room at Chiselhurst, when children and grand-children are visiting is dining-table and very little else. And at this moment in the evening when five or six men are sprawling in their chairs, and the air is clouded with smoke, it is a very typical specimen of the middle class English Temple."

"The dining room looks very different now in the white light of a July noon. Moreover on this particular day, it is not even its normal self. There is a peculiar luncheon spread on the table ..Such preparations denote one of the recognised English festivities, and the appearance of Phoebe, the maid, who has just completed them, the set solemnity of her face and the added touches of black to her dress and cap suggest that this is probably a funeral."

"Naturally it is the dining-room consecrated as it is to the distinguishing orgy of the season—which bears the brunt of what an English household knows as Christmas decoration—Otherwise the only difference between the dining room's appearance at half past nine on Christmas Eve and on any other evening in the year is that little piles of envelope seem to be lying about while there is a lot of tissue paper and string to be seen peeping from odd corners."

In this five-act play three of the five scenes are laid in the Voysey Dining Room. But the effect, far from monotonous and static, is one of variety and movement. In the first, the dining room is shown as on normal days, in the second, under the shadow of mourning and in the third, on a festive occasion. Such comments in each of the scenes are backed up by details which like the red wall-papering, the 'grained oak' wood work, the black marble fireplace in the first, the table cover, the unusual lunch menu, above all—the comparative bareness and tidiness of the room of the second and obtrusive presence of holly and mistletoe in the third, contribute to the distinctive atmosphere such as adorn and dignify a hundred middle class Englishmen of that class on different occasions. The very appearance of the place lives up to and confirms the expectations of the mahogany furniture are the visible tokens of riches and respectability which inspire confidence. Since the 'reputation for wealth' as old Voysey says, is what counts in their world and its various manifestations surround those who live in their midst from childhood onwards, willing submission to whatever demands the conditions make becomes, as in Major Booth Voysey, habitual and spontaneous. The visible changes, chiefly, marks of austerity on the occasion of Christmas in the room which is substantially the same, illustrate, in the context of the exposure of the subject of the mourning and of the denial of obligations of riches, respectability and confidence by Edward Voysey, the hold of conventionality over the outward circumstances. Indeed, how powerful a hold these have is voiced by Hugh Voysey :

"Well, what have I really learnt...about myself

That's the only learning...that there's nothing

I can do or be but reflects our drawing room at Chiselhurst."

The point of Hugh's grievance is that though he is an artist and a bohemian, he has not escaped the mental climate of the 'drawing-room at Chiselhurst.' He could just as well have said, the dining room, for his animus is against the pervasive English Home. It is in view of the vital significance of home, Barker's insistence on the details of the 'typical specimen of the middle class English Temple' on the stage has to be understood. The use of the stage for the visual representation of the pressure of environment upon is made by Berner even more explicitly in *Madras House*. Philip Madras therein says :

"Persian carpet on the floor, Last supper by Chirlandago over the mantelpiece. The sofa you're sitting on was made in a forgotten France. This is a museum. And down at the precious school what are they cultivating Mildred's mind into but another museum of good manners and good taste and..."

The actor playing the role of Philip draws attention to objects actually shown on the stage—a carpet, a painting, a sofa. The remarks moreover indicate the highly artistic quality of the objects. The total effect of the place, according to the speaker is that of a 'museum'. It amounts to saying that their presence in the room is of as little consequence vitally as objects of art in a museum, or even that since a museum is a collection of things which have long ceased to influence conduct in actual life, so have the things in the room lost their dynamic character. The speaker's fear of Mildred's mind becoming just such another museum piece, of good manners and good taste indicates the deadening effect of the environment. One purpose that Barker has made Philip's analysis serve is to justify the use of visual aids on the stage. In so far as some scenic features are made to convey a visible reminder of the fact that objective surroundings can and do mould outlook, behaviour or character more explicitly in Barker's plays than is that of dramatists who had gone before him, the naturalistic stage of the day receives from his plays the most skilful support.

If in the staging of the plays of this time, there is, in the dramatists so far considered, no disinclination to take advantage of the candidly spectacular effects, more markedly in Barrie (as in his *Peter Pan*, *The Admirable*, *Chrichton*, *Mary Rose*, etc.) a little less so in Shaw (as in the Hell scene of *Man and Superman*, the Bishop's Norman kitchen in *Getting Married*, etc.) and in a disguised form in Pinero and Maugham in their decorative aristocratic interiors. Ever since a taste for massive and gradiose interiors has superseded that for the merely sensational or the picturesque, their approximation to or fancied resemblance with scenes in actual life has partly been the object of spectacular pleasure. It is such a partiality for real life effects which Barrie deprecated (in his stage direction to *The Will* quoted above) but acquiesced to out of consideration for a public demand reflected by a dominating style of stage production. Though spectacular interiors, whether stipulated at length or briefly sketched, continue to be exploited in Pinero's and Maugham's high society dramas, increasingly they give way to such less pleasant interiors such as the tasteless dining room of the Mortmores in Pinero's *The Thunderbolt* or the Wilson sitting room in *Chains*, or Taylor's bare shanty in Maugham's *The Land of Promise*, and justify their representation on grounds far less naive than the delight in the novelty of real doors with real knobs, real grass and real cows and horses upon the stage.⁶ Whatever ground for regarding novelty, a recognised stage contrivance for abnormal excitation of the senses, as a legitimate ingredient of dramatic effect there might be behind plays with

an obvious spectacular appeal, re-construction upon the stage of visual effects of daily familiarity, incidentally a no less shrewd piece of novelty by itself, nevertheless arouses associations implicit in the intermediary objects. The naturalistic stage, in the hands of Maugham, Barker and Galsworthy, shows itself capable of harnessing the undeniable appeal of the spectacular in the theatre in such a way as to load the stage picture with the weight and authentic stamp of environment in which the characters of the playwrights, habitually move about.

The stage, which the plays of Galsworthy and such younger men as St. John Hankin and playwrights of the Repertory theatre envisage, indicates both the direction and the degree of progress towards a naturalistic concept of staging. If there is in their directions less of the zest of Shaw and Pinero for detailed scene plotting as to the disposition of doors, windows, chairs, furniture, accessories, even to the movement of the persons on the stage, it is because both the skill and the inclination for exact representation, present in the theatre ever since Robertson's days permitted dramatists to interpret given data in a dramatically significant way. The stage picture for instance in Act II of Galsworthy's *The Silver Box* is constructed not simply with an eye to appropriateness of the scene or to the status and circumstances of characters but as a rendering of the very characteristic environment of the kind of people the Joneses are. The stage direction reads :

"The Jones' lodgings, Merthyr Street, at half past two o'clock. The bare room, with tattered oilcloth and damp, distempered walls, has an air of tidy wretchedness."

From the unpapered and un-adorned walls, the tattered oilcloth and bleak poverty-stricken appearance of the place, the picture is of a lodging-house room such as might be seen in a poor locality like Merthyr Street. The term 'lodgings' to describe the Jones' 'dwelling' because of its generally accepted meaning, relieves Galsworthy of the necessity of entering into all but a few striking features of the normal environment of numerous families in straitened circumstances. But in asking that it should also convey 'an air of tidy wretchedness', Galsworthy seeks an effect which reflects a serious, vital and intensely individual response of the Joneses to their environment. Sometimes this close correspondence between scene and character is not left to the discretion of the producer but indicated by a few characteristic touches such as the 'meagre fire', the bare furnishing, bricked floor, the very austere food, in *Strife* all of which go to make the environment appropriate to Roberts and his wife at a particular time.

Among the younger playwrights of the time, the scene setting,

whether described at length or merely outlined, is not particularly remarkable for architectural and technical virtuosity ; rather, this aspect of the stage pictures is overlaid with considerations arising out of and indeed, implicit in its details. Glimpsed at fitfully and superficially by Shaw, exploited with an eye for theatrical effect more forcefully by Pinero and Maugham, it is Barker and Galsworthy who effected the change from the static concept of stage architecture to the dynamic one of environment from their manner of handling of detail. St. John Hankin and Stanley Houghton are elaborate in their demand upon the stage but the details build up a general effect which is unique to their particular set-up. Thus Hankin mentions numerous items of furniture and etc. in the Jackson drawing room so as to produce a total effect of over-crowding, of being 'Too full of everything', a feature which betokens 'opulence rather than taste'. He has pots of plants in flower distributed all over the room, on the Piano, in the fire-place with the object of indicating 'the Jackson's conception of the proper way to adorn a fire-place and a suitable place for growing plants'. Together with other items they contribute to an effect of a room which is 'Not vulgar, but not distinguished'.⁸ For the business of the play, the room is the replica of the environment which engenders tension and conflict. In like manner the Breakfast room is Houghton's Hindle wakes might be an extension of the personality of Nat Jefferies by means of its fixtures and furnishings. It is a room which is 'intended to be lived in' ; 'comfort and homeliness' are what it is made to yield by the owner.

The younger playwrights, either on account of the level of people they depict or out of practical considerations of the resources of the little theatres, confine themselves to one or two scenes. Githa Sowerby's *Rutherford and Son* has only one scene—the living room, for the whole play. The choice of this room for the setting is grounded in the consideration that in it 'the family life has centred for generations'. In view of its importance as the intimate environment of 'generations', the details selected for mention have significance. It has red papering and solid Mahogany furniture which contribute to its over-all atmosphere, in which other items such as the big table in the middle with a brown cloth cover, the polished sideboard overhung with a portrait, a desk with a brass inkstand, a marble clock on the mantle, etc. in their appointed places lend an air of 'orderliness' and a particularity that sets the room apart from other interiors causing people in it to re-act in ways different from all others. That is to say, the room clearly projects the environment peculiar to the Rutherford household. In a like manner the Wilson sitting room, in Elizabeth Barker's *Chains* cluttered and crowded with

such articles as wicker arm-chairs, folding carpet chairs, bent wood chairs, mahogany sideboard, a dinner-table, a sewing machine, carpet square over oil-cloth, besides numerous photographs adorning the walls not only testify to cramped living condition of people of a certain class but also creates an environment in some degree peculiar to the Wilsons. A like stress on the distinctive in atmosphere and setting is laid by others, sparing of details by a few expressive epithets in their direction. Consider, for instance, the following in Ervine's *Jane Clegg* :

"The room has a cosy air, although it is furnished in the undistinguished manner characteristic of the homes of lower-middle class people."

In the statement above, the identification of the scene with the homes of lower middle class people is a mode of conferring social, economic and cultural dimensions to it, while the effect sought through the term, 'cosy air' would require it to distinguish itself from other such homes on that count.

In the foregoing analysis of the stage picture as envisaged by dramatist belonging to different generations but writing for the stage of the day, a specific and more or less detailed demand of requirements by most of the playwrights has been shown to stand in marked contrast to the brief and perfunctory directions of plays of earlier periods. The enormously increased and still increasing resources of the theatre of the times for spectacular display and for exact and accurate representation have been advanced as the incentive for such demands. It has been further pointed out that the growing partiality for interiors—at first of the massive, gorgeous and elaborate kind had been extended to far less picturesque interiors. From the plays of such dramatists as Maugham, Barker, Galsworthy and a host of younger playwrights, even those of Shaw and Barrie it has been demonstrated how the naturalistic outlook, freely making use of the formidable resources of the theatre, gradually came to permeate the stage. Beginning with the simple atmospheric value of scenery to show correlation between scene and character, in the plays of the naturalistic dramatists it became the objective equivalent of environment. The projection, upon the stage, of visual effects which stimulate immediate recognition and familiar associations, has been the means, increasingly, of equating the stage picture with environment. From the exact nature of specifying requirements and a growing tendency of taking for granted the social, economic and cultural values of representations by the more important playwrights of the period, it is demonstrated that material conditions reproduced on the stage bear the same relation to characters in drama as they do in life. The practice,

which calls forth such a view of the function of the stage makes a significant extension of and exploration into the scope of Spectacle in drama by its integration within a dramatic event in consonance with the naturalistic thesis of mutuality between character and environment.

II

Lighting

A very powerful kind of stage effect had virtually remained unattainable until the arrival of electricity for, the one which used the flickering, uncertain rush light, nor the even glare of lime light could conceive the practicability of control and variation of lighting. From the point of view of the stage the plays of Shakespeare alone held immense possibilities of lighting in such plays as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* among others. From the point of view of the dramatists, Shakespeare or others, dramatically necessary or otherwise, the mention of the hour of the day or night was for only mental note. Control over lighting effects has not only realised the possibilities and even surpassed fondest expectations but has opened up a new line of enquiry as to the effect of lighting on the psychology of men, individually or collectively. Even more necessary is it to enquire how far, subduing its innate spectacularism, it subserves the dramatist's purpose in the theatre. The question, and even more, its answer is important for its bearing on Indian conditions, judging, by its disturbing and distracting power still in such effects as the illusion of a woman run over by a Locomotive in a play called *Setu* (The Bridge), and of a mine flooded with water in *Panchatapa* all with the jugglery of light by a young Indian Technician, Tapas Sen.¹⁰

The opening of Galsworthy's *The Silver Box* is anything but exciting from the point of view of lighting. The stage direction reads :

"The curtain rises on the Barthwicks' dining-room, large, modern, and well-furnished ; the window curtains drawn. Electric light is burning...It is past midnight."

Electric lighting had been in use on the stage since the eighties and so Galsworthy could not have drawn attention to it as a piece of novelty. It is likely that it still enjoyed something like a status symbol ; in the absence of any specification, it is unfair to suppose that it must have been the only light. The emptiness of the stage on the rise of the curtain, the arrangement with due prominence to certain articles—a tray with whiskey, syphon and silver box and the light presumably coming from a single source, produce the effect of midnight which is what the

dramatist wants. Such an effect, of being the property of prosperous people, of being at the moment deserted, of the late hour, of investing the room with a 'character', is implicit in a modest demand from lighting.

Modest as such use of lighting is, it is made to serve a specific dramatic purpose. Such is not the use to which specific mention of time of a scene is put by Jones in *The Lie* where he states explicitly that it is four o'clock in the afternoon or by Shaw when he, in *John Bull's Other Island*, makes a point of announcing the time of a visitor's arrival (I-P : 405) for nothing is made of it in the play's business whereas the milieu, the moment and his own beatific state inspire Barthwick to an outburst of hospitality to the casually picked up Jones.

The fact that nearly every act and scene of almost any play of the period makes a point of indicating the approximate time of day must be taken to mean that the playwrights have the lighting requirements in performance in mind. The setting of most plays of the period are interiors requiring different kinds of lighting for day and for night. Barrie and sometimes Shaw make exacting and intricate demands from lighting in their out-of-doors scenes. The fulfilment of the conditions enhances the spectacular effects of such scenes as of the Garden in Act I of *Dear Brutus*, the island in Act II of *Admirable Crichton*, the Hell scene of *Man and Superman*, the stage directions to which by themselves are fascinating.

From the point of view of drama, however, the naturalistic lighting requirement should be examined in the context of dramatic action, dialogue and other conditions. The *Voysey Inheritance* is a remarkable play from the point of view of lighting for there are only two sets : the Voysey Office at Lincoln's Inn and the dining room at Cheselhurst. On the surface the lighting requirement of the Office is very modest and insignificant :

"Mr. Voysey's own room, into which he walks about twenty past ten of a morning radiates enterprise."

The same scene in the Fourth Act, without Mr. Voysey, is described thus :

"Mr. Voysey's room at the Office is Edward's now. It has somehow lost that brilliancy which the old man's occupation seemed to give it."

The same room figures in both the scenes and at the same time of the day. Barker, however, would have it that without any substantial change, the room which once radiated 'enterprise' has 'somehow lost its brilliancy'. In other words, the specific quality of the environment has changed. It is obvious that with identical lighting, it would not be possible to obtain the different effects, more so as no substantial

change in the appearance is to be made. It is, therefore, only lighting which can indicate the subtle change that has come about. The point to note is that lighting effect is being employed for no spectacular effect. The lighting is to be of a kind to bring out fully the distinctive traits of the room under the occupations of two persons of utterly different characters. Lighting, thus, is capable of projecting changes of environment.

In like manner, the dining room, under different conditions makes different demands from lighting :

Act II : "It is a very typical specimen of the middle class English domestic temple..."

Act III : "The dining room looks very different in the white light of a July noon. Moreover, on this particular day, it isn't even its normal self..."

In the first, the time is after dinner and in the second, noon, under the shadow of Mr. Voysey's funeral. In the first Edward Voysey is the only one who does not fall into the spell of a family gathering, the atmosphere of which is present in the dining room. The kind of light which plays upon the furniture confidence and intimacy. In the other, in the glaring light of day, the room presents a cold and formal look as befitting a solemn occasion. Suitable lighting, therefore, is of very great necessity to produce two totally different effects in the room which remains substantially the same. Here again is a demand for lighting to produce the impression of altering conditions.

The most outstanding example of naturalistic employment of light effect is seen in *Justice*. The scene is Falder's cell. Being entirely in pantomime the full impact of representation is powerfully conveyed. The source of natural light is a window :

"The barred window with a ventilator is high up in the Middle of the end wall."

"Low down in the corner by the door is a thick glass screen about a foot square, covering the gas jet let into the wall."

The scene opens in 'fast fading daylight'. Falder betrays unmistakably symptoms of extreme nervous tension, all his movements reveal very imperfect control over his bodily powers. During the course of the scene the light begins to fail badly. At one stage, 'it has grown nearly dark'. As he stands, half paralysed on the fall of the tin can from his hand, staring at the stuff of his shirt he looks as if he is 'seeing things'. The stage direction then reads :

"There is a short tap and click ; the cell light behind the glass screen has been turned up. The cell is brightly lighted."

In the Scene, the semi-darkness is the first of the lighting effect asked for. Even this little is dimmed during the course of the scene, until it is almost dark. But almost immediately the darkness is dispelled by the light from the gas-jet. The gas-jet is significant. Though electricity had arrived, prisons till then could not be expected to receive its benefit. But more important is the synchronisation of lighting with the course of Falder's failing self-control. In the light of day mental discipline imposes some sort of restriction upon his movements. The growing darkness fast removes the control of conscious intellect. The fall of the tin-can and the sound it produces is the breaking point. The brilliant light from the gas-jet then reveals the disintegration of sanity. The use of light in the scene is not symbolical because the variations in lighting do not *stand* for the changes which occur in Falder's mind but such as reveal them. The light is a sense-perception which enters into Falder's consciousness and physically affects his motor behaviour. In this one scene Galsworthy has put to psychological uses the newest yet stage-effect to delineate the very process of the loss of mental balance.

Even in plays where lighting is not required to fulfil such a specialised function, its effect in naturalistic plays is utilised for the purpose of establishing a close connection between scene and character. Consider the prominent lighting effect of the act of *Jane Clegg* :

"It is almost nine o'clock, and, as the evening is chilly a bright fire burns in the grate."

No other light is mentioned though the fire light may not be the source of lighting of the scene. Particular mention of it is, therefore, to emphasise its importance to the scene. Taken in conjunction with other details its significance is unmistakable. The room has a cosy air although it is furnished in the taste (or lack of it) of lower middle class people. The special effect of domesticity sought is enhanced by another detail :

"Johnny and Jenny, aged ten and eight years respectively are playing on the rug in front of the fire."

As the most immediately arresting object for the sight on the stage, the fire with its flickering light makes a deep impression. Old Mrs. Clegg warms herself by its side and the children play on the rug itself as Jane sits knitting and talking near it. The fire exudes warmth and radiates light and the indefinable placidity of the home. To how delicate a use lighting effect has been put can be appreciated when it is remembered that the play's action is concerned with the almost heroic fight of Jane to preserve the home for the sake of the children and how the action of the play ironically contrasts and belies this picture of domestic bliss.

From the naturalistic handling of stage lighting as analysed above it

can be readily seen that far from using it to produce pyrotechnic effects well within its skill, naturalistic drama is content to utilise it for legitimate dramatic purposes of rendering environment vivid and revealing depths of character. If it has not fully exploited its hitherto unexplored psychological possibilities, it has not encouraged those marvellous effects, pointed out and which within a few years was to be completely revolutionised and made more marvellous.

III

Costume

On the stage, among other visual effects what the actors wear is significant. Costume is the simplest visual stage device to establish the identity, the social standing, the age or period and even outlook on life. Costume effects of some kinds are now well recognised. The heavily stylised and conventionalised Greek costume, with its mask and elaborate head-dress long and flowing robes and cothurnus from which a voice and a presence was all that was asked for of the stage, is one such; the presentation of historical or legendary characters in the garb often gorgeous and costly (as the Elizabethan presentation of Greek, Roman or Historical plays) of the day, as of similar experiments of a latter day is another, a close fidelity to character and times with minute touches of verisimilitude constitutes a third. Of these the last establishes such an immediate correlation between dress and character that its implication for naturalism is worth examining.

In *Man and Superman* Shaw describes Ramsden's clothes with meticulous care thus :

"He wears a black frock, coat, a white waist coat (it is bright spring weather), and trousers, neither black nor perceptibly blue, one of those indefinitely mixed hues which the modern clothier has produced to harmonise with the religion of respectable men."

The clothes thus described are such as are commonly worn by English gentlemen of a certain age, social standing and of a certain period. He takes pains to stress the extremely formal correctness down to the white waist coat (although 'it is bright spring weather'.) He also draws attention to the conventionality of the colour of the trousers. The effect that Shaw is intent on producing is the utter conventionality of the man so much so that he may be regarded as the embodiment of conventionality. Such indeed is the part he plays in the drama. The point of interest in this is that in being so he becomes the representative of a type without any distinguishable individual trait.

In *Major Barbara* a more subtle handling of the bearing of costume is to be seen, the following extracts are of interest :

"Sarah is slender, bored, and mundane, Barbara is robust, jollier and more energetic. Sarah is fashionably dressed ; Barbara is in Salvation Army Uniform."

And in Act III :

"He starts on seeing Barbara fashionably attired and in low spirits.

Lomax : You've left off your uniform :

Barbara says nothing ; but an expression of pain passes over her face."

Barbara, a peer's grand daughter and a millionaire's daughter, is presented by Shaw in Salvation Army uniform. In this way Shaw exploits the spectacular value of her appearance. At the same time he indicates the singularity of her character by her wearing of this at home on all occasions. In the course of the play Barbara renounces the Army and its dress. Consequently in Act III she is seen in fashionable clothes. Shaw draws pointed attention to its effect upon even such unobservant and tactless character as Lomax and brings out by this means Barbara's attitude not only to the clothes but towards life at the moment. In such a handling of costume the typical and the atypical in character are skilfully drawn out.

Except on rare occasions Shaw regards costume from the point of view of the theatre as a means of establishing typical qualities. For a closer correlation between dress and character, Barrie's treatment of Ernest Wooley and his clothes particularly, and their bearing on character generally, *Admirable Crichton* provides a good example. With regard to Wooley's dress and appearance he says :

"He is dressed in excellent taste, with just the little bit more which shows that he is not without a sense of humour ; the dandiacal are often saved by carrying a smile in their spats, let us say."

Couched in Barrie's whimsical and fanciful style, he puts forth a demand upon not only the costumier but on the character. There is no attempt to describe items of dress as in Shaw. At the same time the effect he seeks is of Wooley's foppishness in dress. It is the effect of 'smartness' of which the wearer is aware. Indeed, under the most trying circumstances and turns of fortune on the island and in society Wooley lives upto the promise of his singularity in clothes. It is 'just that a little bit more' that makes him something more than an empty headed fop in the Restoration style. His foppishness is a sort of protective colouring to disarm suspicion of a native shrewdness and cunning. In the same

play it is dress which confers distinction upon the 'Guv', though made of the same stuff as that of the others. How important a part his dress plays in the Impression of personality is dramatically demonstrated in the closing situation of Act III (p. 403). The 'robe', which was to Chrichton the visible token of his regality and affected by him on special occasions, is cast off by him with an air of finality when he has taken the momentous decision to return. The numerous references of the play help to form certain inferences as to its contribution to the naturalistic concept of costuming. The undoubted importance that Barrie attaches to the bearing of dress on appearance, manners, behaviour and actions indicates that he accepts it as the logical product of circumstances. Very few dramatists have gone into its implication or utilised it dramatically as Barrie has.

Among those who have given serious consideration to costume as a means of enhancing characterisation is Granville Barker. Appropriately, his *Madras House* is a saga of two London milliner's establishments. Such plot as there is, centers round the sale of one of these, *Madras House*, as it is called. Something like a philosophy of clothes is evolved as a by-product of the discussion of the Woman question. The debate on feminine dress, staged against the background of a gyrating exhibition of live models is between its individual and social implication. Mr. State, the prospective buyer puts forward one view :

"The Woman's Movement is Woman expressioning herself. Let us look at things as they are. What are a Woman's chief means...How often her only means of expressing herself ? Anyway, what is the first thing she spends her money on ? Clothes, gentlemen, Clothes. Therefore I say though at Canon street we may palp with ideas...the ready-made skirt is out of date. ..."

Once woman's right to self-expression is conceded, Mr. State's proposition follows logically. Her chief means, sometimes, her 'only' means of self-expression is her clothes. Every woman wishes to wear clothes according to her own taste, clothes which will express her individuality. She would like to exercise her choice in this matter with complete freedom. But ready-made clothes, such as the skirt, restrict this freedom, since she has to put up with others tastes and specifications. What, therefore, Mr. State wants to do is to throw open to all women the opportunity to enjoy the privilege of unfettered choice as is exercised by the customers of *Madras House*. The right to its seriously challenged by Constantine Madras. While he does not object to women adorning themselves, he does take exception to the kind of 'aphrodisiac', merchandise the place deals in. He objects to the tolerance of a country.

"...where women are let loose with money to spend and time to waste. Encouraged to flaunt their charms on the very streets proud if they see the busman wink."

The ground of Constantine Madras' objection is that prosperous women have been given the opportunity in England to exercise such freedom and they have used it to 'flaunt' their 'charms' shamelessly. They have become so degraded that they are pleased even by the busman's appreciative wink. In other words, he objects because he considers that such women constitute a menace to society.

The debate has more than an academic interest in as much as it has a bearing on at least two characters directly. Mrs. Yates, an employee of the sister firm, pays the penalty of such self-expression. The employers while trading on their good looks severely discourage their doing so on their own account and dismissing them if their self-expression has consequences, outside wedlock. In either case, the independent working women are rendered socially useless being prevented from having children. On the other hand, over-refined women take care to have as few children as possible so as not to interfere with their pleasures. They are taught to cultivate charm and taste. To look beautiful, to dress tastefully becomes an end in itself for them. Jessica defiantly declares this to her husband, when blamed for flirting with Thomas: "I shall never give up dressing beautifully". Besides these, the play also demonstrates the undoubtedly 'aphrodisiac' quality of some of the fashionable dresses and brings out its effect upon susceptible men like Major Thomas. Though in the play the debate ends inconclusively Barker has been able to extend the implication of dress by not only bringing out its scope for expression of personality but the grave responsibility also which such self-expression entails.

Costume in naturalistic drama has not been lightly disposed of as a necessary stage expedient to secure the audiences prompt attention by some arresting device or a rough—and ready identification of characters by profession or types but has been explored diligently for dramatic reflection on character and life.

IV

Acting

In the foregoing pages it has been shown how specific claims in respect of setting, lighting and costume made upon the resources of the theatre by naturalistic drama necessitated a modification of its inherent tendency towards spectacular effects and an increased attention towards contemporary life. In view of the playwrights' demands for those aids

which would, to use Barker's phrase 'illumine some corner of contemporary experience', it is necessary to examine what this drama has to ask of acting and if this demand calls for anything which renders it naturalistic.

Granville Barker had characterised the present as 'the playwright's century' and Cole and Chinoy, the Historians of Acting had called the last—the actor-managers'. In view of this, the observations of Henry Arthur Jones on acting deserve attention :

"In asking you to accept the dedication of *The Lie*, I abdicate my authorship for the moment, and become one tumultuous response to your splendidly sustained outbursts of emotion."

The compliment has been paid to the leading lady of the cast for her rendering of the heroine, Elinor Shale. He has been so much impressed by her acting that he is prepared to go to the length of crediting her with the creating of the character, thereby abdicating his claim as its creator. In other words, it is the personality of the actress which has been poured into the role so that it cannot be conceived otherwise. From this it follows that a dramatic character is more a creation of the actor's or actress' personality than the author's, that is to say, a dramatic role is eminently a 'vehicle of personality'. Such in fact used to be the standard view of a dramatic role in the great actor-managers century. In such a view, all that the dramatist valued was 'the splendidly sustained outburst of motion'. If display of passion is what Jones regards as the outstanding function of the actor or actress, the devising of highly moving emotional scenes will be the dramatist's aim. Now, intrinsic merit of plays constructed according to this specification apart, it connotes a willing submission of the dramatists to the great actor. Besides, such a dramatist makes no demand the theatre cannot satisfy on its own terms.

Pinero's attitude to the theatre shows no radical difference from that of Jones'. He too regards the production of a 'peculiar kind of emotional effect' as the chief business of the theatre. He is a little more explicit as to how such scenes are produced. It is by means of a 'skilfully devised form and order' that the emotional possibility of a scene is realised. Plays written according to this formula are better constructed as to probability of incidents and situations than those which exploits rank emotionalism.—But if the two emotionally stirring scenes, one in *The Thunderbolt*, in which the anguish of Phyllis Mortimore is pressed out to the last drop, the other in *His House In Order* in which the great hortatory speech of the raisonneur Hilary causes a change of heart in Nina Jesson, are anything to go by, then it must also be

mentioned that the effect is achieved at the expense of consistency in characterisation for in neither case the behaviour is adequately motivated.

In the matter of acting, from what has been said above, the plays of Jones and Pinero, by their own admission, are governed by a consideration for emotional exploitation, well within the histrionic resources of the stage. Yet, it is with the same stage that Shaw expressed grave dissatisfaction as dramatic critic and playwright, and that in the field of acting itself. Commenting upon the acting of a latter day writes Shaw :

"Behind the scenes, too, I had my difficulties. In generation which knew nothing of any sort of acting but drawingroom acting, and which considered a speech of more than twenty words impossibly long, I went back to the classical style and wrote long rhetorical speeches like operatic solos.....As a producer I went back to the forgotten heroic stage business and the exciting or impressive declamation..."

Shaw made this observation in 1950 and had in mind the acting with which he had most to do at the time when his plays first gained the recognition of public performance. As is well-known in stage history, this public acknowledgment came to Shaw with the Vedrenne-Barker season at the Court Theatre during the period 1903-1907 in which the plays of Shaw accounted for the largest number of performance. The target of Shaw's criticism in the above extract, therefore, is the production of this kind of stage and its successors in the decades that followed rather than the commercial theatre on which his plays did not appear until beyond the period under consideration. Before analysing the implication of Shaw's criticism for naturalistic drama, another curious observation of Shaw on acting should be taken into account ;

"There was nothing wrong with the acting ; I cannot remember any actor or actress then occupying a leading position who could be called a duffer : they had all been "through the mill" and could make intruders who had not, look ridiculous."

It is evident that Shaw here refers to a school of acting other than that with which he had his difficulties. The actors of this school had 'gone through the mill' and knew their business. Obviously, Shaw has in mind the experienced and trained actors of the time, such as were likely to be seen on the professional no stage towards which, at that time, Shaw could only cast a longing glance. In other words, Shaw did not find any fault with the acting which the professional had to offer. That is to say, he thought the acting capable of rendering what he demanded in his plays, 'long rhetorical speeches,' heroic stage

business and 'exciting or impressive declamation' Indeed, rare are the important speeches of characters in his plays which are less than twenty words long, and even if the first prologue of Caesar and Cleopatra is ignored as outside the play, there are the notoriously long speeches of Tanner and the Devil in *Man and Superman* to mention only the actor schooled in plays of a kind which required declamation and heroic 'business'. Declamations, rhetorical speeches, debates and discussions these being the very meat of his plays, play of 'ideas' as he liked to call them, it is not surprising also that he should find the acting of the kind with which he had to put up, unsatisfactory. His dissatisfaction, in fact, goes deeper on account of his very conception of his character. This he voices in connection with what he calls 'representational' production :

'Neither have I been what you call a representationalist or realist. I was always in the classical tradition, recognising conscious self-knowledge power of expression, and...a freedom from inhibitions, which in real life would make them monsters of genius...You are right in saying that my plays require a special technique of acting, and in particular great virtuosity in sudden transitions of mood that seem to the ordinary actor to be transition from one 'line of character to another'.

In this passage Shaw makes a very important observation on the qualities of 'stage characters' which differentiate them from characters in real life, at any rate, of his own plays. These are 'conscious self-knowledge', 'power of expression', freedom from inhibitions, which in real life would have made them 'monsters of genius'. And the reason why he does not regard himself as a 'representationalist' or even a 'realist' is perhaps because these do not agree with such a view of stage characters and consequently do not call upon actors to take them into consideration. Also, 'the sudden transitions of mood' which his plays call for are not in accord with the actor's concept of the kind of transition that seems to him normal. The import of Shaw's concept of stage character for acting is to remove it as far from actual life behaviour as possible since in it the stage behaviour of characters would appear monstrous. This explains Shaw's dissatisfaction with the 'drawing-room' school of acting with its surface realism which in its aim of conveying the illusion of conversation such as might well take place in a drawing-room is unlikely to act in a way that would destroy that illusion. To him and for his purposes such acting would fail to render what he required by under-playing. This is the basis of his criticism of acting in Barker's production about which he says :

"His only other fault was to suppress his actors when they pulled out all their stops and declaimed as Shakespeare should be declaimed. They either under-acted or were afraid to act at all lest they should be accused of being "hams" :

From Shaw's opinions of the acting potentialities of the stage of the time when he was actively associated with it either as critic or dramatist it would seem that acting of atleast two schools could be distinguished, whether simultaneous or successive is not very clear or important. He assigns to the old school such actors as Ristori, Salvini and Barrie Sullivan. Significantly he does not include either Irving or Tree, not to mention Bancroft or Alexander. For the old school he has nothing but praises, though it is not clear whether it could or did include the latter. He had other reasons for disapproving of both Irving and Tree, the chief being their unscrupulous handling of Shakespeare's text, but he has often paid tribute to their acting talent. On the other hand he has a confirmed dislike for the acting of the drawing-room school variety. He is inclined also to lump the 'representationalist' school with the other as a kind he disapproves of, Shaw's view of the shortcoming of the stage with which he had to deal was that it did not and could not furnish him with the qualities in its actors that were needed for the rendering of his characters. What the stage could and did give was drawing-room behaviour for which his characters had no use. Shaw's statement raises certain doubts. If what he says concerning the limitations in acting be true, it is not clear where from Jones and Pinero got those 'peculiar emotional effects', those 'splendidly sustained outbursts of emotion', from their actors. Surely actors and actresses capable of such feats could be counted upon to declaim and register 'sudden transitions' of mood. Either Shaw did not share their enthusiasm regarding the capacities of the actors or what seems more likely, he had no access to them, on his own terms. At any rate, this much is clear that he was not satisfied with the actors with whom it fell to his lot to work.

A tradition of surface realism, undoubtedly was, since the days of Robertson and Bancroft at any rate, a stock-in-trade of the theatre from over the last century. The social melodramas of Jones and the society farces of Pinero did require a knowledge and refinement of social intercourse. The plays of Maugham and Sutro ministered occasion to it in the nineteen-tens. The dramatist who extracted the maximum benefit from acting which imitated the surface of life was James Barrie. Numerous are the occasions in his plays which provide a chance to excel in this kind.

Chrichton's superb gesture of getting his shoulders sag and of wring-

ing his hands in a servile manner to indicate his abdication of royalty comes to mind at once. Maggie Wylie's gesture when asked to make a speech after Shand's victory, a speech of two words, 'MY CONSTITUENTS': accompanied by the gesture of stretching out her hand towards them, or Shand's laughter of release at the end of the play, Dearth's transformation from a bright-eyed, happy artist to a bleary-eyed, drunken wreck of one are easily memorable occasions in the theatre. Much of this kind of effect is produced by stage 'business' and by-play. But it must remain a matter of opinion as to how far they enhance insight into character.

Against such background the opinion of Granville Barker, a man combining within himself the three-fold experience of actor, playwright and producer of as variegated fare as Shakespeare, Greek plays, Shaw and Continental drama has undoubted weight.

He says :

"Why do we go to see a play that we really like again and again ?
...It is the elucidation of character that does not pall ; and it is in this virtuosity, all that is learnable allowed for—that the actor's art finds its final task and true achievement".

LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER

A TREMBLING BALANCE

BIYOT K. TRIPATHY

The story is simple and best stated in the words of Graham Hough :

Constance Chatterley's husband, Sir Clifford Chatterley, is left crippled and impotent by a war wound. He makes the best of his situation, and becomes a writer of some distinction. They are rich and have an intelligent and not disagreeable circle of friends. Constance devotes herself loyally to look-after her husband, but nevertheless becomes gradually oppressed by the aridity and emptiness of her life. She meets Mellors, her husband's game-keeper, a bitter, lonely man who has also been unhappily married. They fall violently in love, she finds a sexual fulfilment that she has never known, and after many misgivings decides to leave her husband...stated so the plot seem almost vulgarly conventional.¹

Stated as a story it certainly appears naive, but a synopsis of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, it appears to me, is invariably less than half the novel. This novel has two themes, only one of which is a story, the other being the social background.² The story alone, isolated from the social theme, savours of romanticism, if one omits to consider its implications in the study of individuality in fulfilment and sacrifice. But one cannot legitimately omit the parallel theme which is entwined with the story. Critics have very often felt something lacking in the novel. It appears unsatisfactory even as a love story. F. R. Leavis attributes this to the deliberateness of the form :

Lady Chatterley's Lover is a courageous, profoundly sincere and very deliberate piece of work ; if it errs it is not through lack of calculation. The trouble rather lies in its being in certain ways too deliberate—too deliberate, at any rate, to be a wholly satisfactory work of art, appealing to imaginatively sensitised feeling.³

This explanation, however, is not wholly satisfactory. A deliberately constructed novel has a greater chance of attaining beauty. *The Rainbow* and *Sons and Lovers* were also deliberate, and because of it, satisfactory. Nor is the fault in the imposition of dramatic discipline on the natural freedom of the novel-form, for the restrictions are organic to the

story rather than imposed. The fault, it appears, lies more in what we expect of the novel or the frame of reference we apply to the story. We expect a spirited love tale, climaxed by descriptions of the sexual act, portraying characters as phallic symbols, and creating an atmosphere altogether sensually romantic. But instead we find ourselves progressively involved in a difficult moral choice involving the approval of Connie's behaviour and the rejection of the industrial world. Apart from this the ebullience of the love-tale toned down by a perception of decay all around ; the sex-descriptions are counterpoised with parallel notes of frustration and pessimism. Mellors, the alleged phallic symbol, is too hesitant, timid, and pessimistic to represent the wild elements. Thus our romantic anticipation is frustrated. What tones down the zest or elan of the love-tale and brings it to the world of realities is the second theme which has proved so elusive and yet which has been so carefully knit into the story by the masterly craft of Lawrence.

The deliberate juxtaposition of themes is evident. In Ch. VIII Constance goes to Mellors for the key to the hut. The love story is about to begin. But Lawrence pulls it down from the romantic to the realistic plane by showing the coarseness of Mellors through his speech. The romantic imagination of Constance is repulsed, "She hated the excess of vernacular in his speech." Yet she is attracted towards the naturalness of Mellors. The following chapter unambiguously introduces the second theme through Mrs Bolton's sketch of the society of Tevershall : a society of drifters who do not wish to belong. All they want permanently is money, with which they can buy pleasure. They just "hang around—and have tea in some fine tea-place like the Mikado—and go to the Pally or the Pictures or the Empire, with some girl." (Ch. IX) And then they drift apart. This is the world of the pseudo-moderns, who have no sense of belonging, no vital contact with others, and no integrated principle of life.⁴ The juxtaposition of the love-theme and social theme thus begins. The one concerns individual aspirations while the other collective social realities. The latter is expressed in terms of various factors, all acting as anti-theses to the love-theme : through a search for the real, through moral misgivings, through descriptions of decaying life, through ideologies of collectivism, and through a recognition of social realities over individual ones. In chapter X Connie opens out to Mellors and they have their first sexual contact. But immediately afterwards follow Connie's misgivings : "Then she wondered, just dimly wondered, why ? Why was this necessary ? ... Was it real ? ... Her tormented modern-woman's brain still had no rest. Was it real ?" Following this, a description of the squalid industrial world is brought to tone down the exuberance of the

love affair and to reveal a context where conformity firmly destroys individuality :

And from the top he could see the country, bright rows of lights at Stack Gate, smaller lights at Tevershall pit, the yellow lights of Tevershall and lights everywhere, here and there, on the dark country, with the distant blush of furnaces, faint and rosy, since the night was clear, the roseness of the outpouring of white-hot metal. An undefinable quick of evil in theme ! And all the unease, the ever-shifting dread of the industrial night in the Midlands . There, in the world of the mechanical greedy, greedy mechanism, mechanised greed sparkling with lights and gushing hot metal and roaring with traffic there lay the vast evil thing, ready to destroy whatever did not conform. (Ch. X)

This is followed by a swing back to the love theme ; Connie comes again and again to the reluctant Mellors, until she gets him :

She clung to him unconscious in passion, and he never quite slipped from her, and she felt the soft bud of him within her stirring, and strange rhythms flushing up into her with a strange rhythmic growing motion, swelling and swelling till it filled all her clearing consciousness, and then began again the unspeakable motion that was not really motion, but from deepening whirlpools of sensation whirling deeper and deeper through through all her tissue and consciousness, till she was one concentric fluid of feeling, and she lay there crying in unconscious inarticulate cries. (Ch. X)

Then the chapter shifts its focus to the society-theme with Clifford's denunciation of emotion : "The modern world has only vulgarised emotion by letting it loose. What we need is classic control." The focus stays on Clifford and Mrs Bolton until the chapter ends with the past of Mellors revealed. Chapter XI moves further away from the love-theme and is climaxed by the revelation of the squalidness of Tevershall through the motor drive :

It was as if dismalness had soaked through and through everything. The utter negation of natural beauty, the negation of the gladness of life, the utter absence of the instinct for shapely beauty which every bird and beast has, the utter death of the human intuitive faculty was appalling. (Ch. XI)

And the men :

So she thought she was going home, and saw the colliers trailing from the pits, grey-black, distorted, one shoulder higher than the other, slurring their heavy ironshod boots. Underground gray

faces, whites of eyes rolling, necks cringing from the pit roof, shoulders out of shape. Men ! Men ! Alas, in some ways patient and good men. In other ways non-existent. (Ch. XI)

And Mellors is linked with this theme : "Yet Mellors had come from such a father." Then the chapter moves to a close through the theme of death : the death of Mrs Bolton's husband twenty three years ago. The love theme is totally excluded from this chapter. In the following chapter (Ch.XII) Connie and Mellors meet again and the love story gains momentum.

The rhythmic juxtaposition of themes is no longer ambiguous. That it is deliberate is proved by the almost mechanical and calculated alternation.⁵ In Ch. XIII, which follows, one can logically anticipate the exclusion of the love-theme. And it is excluded. The chapter is all about Clifford, the wheel-chair, and power. In Ch.XIV there is, as one may anticipate, a revival of the love theme. The transition from one theme to the other is not sudden but gradual ; the chapter opens with a reference to Clifford and moves through the past life of Mellors to sexual consummation. There is in the next chapter again a calculated alternation between the two themes : the parallel movement of sexual fulfilment and pessimism ; of the positive approach to life and of negation. A close examination of this chapter will reveal Lawrence's technique. The chapter opens with a reference to Hilda's letters and moves through Clifford's reluctance to let Connie go to Venice, to her coming to Mellors where she declares her desire to marry him : " 'And then when I come back,' she said, 'I can tell Clifford I must leave him. And you and I can go away.' " Then the conversation between the two swings to the society-theme through the Colonel's indictment of the English middle-class to Mellors's denunciation of all England or for that matter, all mankind :

"I tell you, every generation breeds a more rabby generation, with indiarubber tubing for guts and tin legs and tin faces. Tin people ! It's all a steady sort of bolshevism just killing off the human thing, and worshipping the mechanical thing. Money, money, money. ! All the modern lot get their real kick out of killing the old human feeling out of man, making mincemeat of the old Adam and the old Eve." (Ch.XV)

The mood gets blacker with Mellors advocating the extermination of the human race :

"Quite nice ! To contemplate the extermination of the human species and the long pause that follows before some other species crops up, it calms you more than anything else. And if

we go on in this way, with everybody, intellectuals, artists, government, industrialists and workers all frantically killing off the last human feeling, the last bit of their intuition, the last healthy instinct ; if it goes on in algebraical progression, as it is going on : then ta-tah ! to the human species ! Good bye ! darling ! the serpent swallows itself and leaves a void, considerably messed up, but not hopeless." (Ch.XV)

Even to bring a child to this world is wrong : " 'It seems to me a wrong and bitter thing to do, to bring a child into this world.' " This is in immediate contrast with Connie's growing desire for having a child : " 'No ! Don't say it !' she pleaded. 'I think I am going to have 'one. Say you will be pleased.' " The two following pages poise the two themes delicately. Connie is moving into vital contact : "She pulled open his clothing and uncovered his belly and kissed his navel. Then she laid her cheek on his belly, and pressed her arm round his warm, silent loins. They were alone in the flood." But Mellors's mind is yet full of the negation, deadness, and ugliness of money-centred industrial life : " 'Take yer clothes off an' look at yourselves. Yer ought ter be alive an' beautiful, an' yer ugly an' half dead...That's working for money.' " While this picture of decadence is being painted Connie threads forget-me-nots in his pubic hair and tells him that he has four different kinds of hair in his body. From here there is a swing back through Mellors to gloom and hopelessness :

"Because when I feel the human world is doomed, has doomed itself by its own mingy beastliness, then I feel the Colonies aren't far enough. The moon wouldn't be far enough, because even there you could look back and see the earth, dirty, beastly, unsavoury among all the stars : made foul by men." (Ch. XV)

From the extreme position of negation there is a sharp swing back to fulfilment : the thunder shower, Connie's naked dance in the rain, the chase, the taking, and the flowers connect the life-issues with powers of nature, with fertility, with animal vitality, and with beauty. There in a tapering off towards the end of the chapter. Then Ch. XVI brings in the society-theme with Clifford, Mrs Bolton, and Hilda. This contains forces antagonistic to Connie's way of life. Hilda and Mellors finally fall out and Connie spends her last night with Mellors before leaving for Venice :

It was a night of sensual passion, in which she was a little startled and almost unwilling : yet pierced again with piercing thrills of sensuality, different, sharper, more terrible than the thrills of tenderness, but, at the moment, more desirable. Though a little frightened, she let him have his way, and the reckless, shameless

sensuality shook her to her foundations, stripped her to the very last, and made a different woman of her. It was not really love. It was not voluptuousness. It was sensuality sharp and searing as fire, burning the soul to tinder. (Ch. XVI)

Next morning Hilda arrives and the opposing forces come with her presence: " 'Thank goodness you'll be away from him for some time I' "

Chapter XVII is given to the society-theme. London is life-less :

But she was not happy in London. The people seemed so spectral and blank. They had no alive happiness, no matter how brisk and goodlooking they were. It was all barren.

Paris is no better :

Paris was sad. One of the saddest towns : weary of its now-mechanical sensuality, weary of the tension of money, money, money, weary even of resentment and conceit, just weary to death, and still not sufficiently Americanized or Londonized to hide the weariness under a mechanical jig-jig-jig !

Then Venice, Villa Esmeralda, the over-bearing Sir Alexander, his crowded household, Duncan Forbes, and the gondoliers ready to prostitute themselves. Even Venice is absorbed into the society-theme :

- Built of money, blossomed of money, and dead with money. The money-deadness! Money, money, money, prostitution and deadness.

This is followed by the explosion of Tevershall muck and scandal through the letters. Chapter XVIII is one of adjustment with the world to make the living together possible for Constance and Mellors. Here, the society-theme encloses a short act of tender love-making which occurs in the middle of the chapter.

This systematic alternation and juxtaposition of the two themes cannot possibly be accidental. There is a purpose, and the purpose is not mere contrast between two apparently disconnected themes, because as we shall see, one theme derives significance and meaning from the other. The two themes are inter-dependent, and should be studied as such. Contrast there certainly is, and testifies to Lawrence's sense of balance and proportion. In the love-theme emotion and impulse are the integrating principles of life. The wholeness of living vitally is portrayed, a wholeness which Mark Spilka has discovered in Lawrence's portrayal of life.⁶ On the other hand the society-theme, of which the latter Clifford is a part, has money and power as the integrating principle of life :

Money? Perhaps one couldn't say the same there. Money was always wanted. Money, success, the bitch-goddess, as

Tommy Dukes persisted in calling it, after Henry James, that was a permanent necessity...Money you have to have. You needn't really have anything else. (Ch. VI)

Having made this statement Lawrence immediately brings in the other theme to heighten the contrast : "She thought of Michaelis and the money she might have had with him ; and even that she didn't want " (Ch. VI) Thus, even small narrative units are built on tense balance of opposites.

The contrast, however, does not end here. One finds that the modern industrial man is a drifter. He does not have a sense of belonging. His principle of life has disintegrated. He is a pseudo-isolationist and pseudo-modern. If there is anything which integrates his life, it is money, power, and success. As a contrast to this aspect of the society-theme stands Constance, who wants to belong. It is because of her desire to live in rapport with someone in the wholeness of her body and mind that she has to leave Clifford. It is because of this desire of belonging that she could not keep on with Michaelis, who being a drifter had no sense of belonging himself : "Mick couldn't keep anything up. It was part of his very being that he must break off any connection, and be loose, isolated, absolutely lone dog again." (Ch. IV) But Constance must belong :

"No I" She said, "Love me I Love me, and say you'll keep me. Say you'll keep me I Say you'll never let me go, to the world not to anybody." (Ch. XVIII).

The effective harmonization of the contrasting themes is a structural feat, but the contrast is not an end in itself. The second theme adds meaning and significance to the first. The two themes are not independent of one another. They are contraries which coexist in life. The society-theme to which Clifford belongs and of which the ugliness of Tevershall is the product moves round the fixed centre of money and power. Constance Chatterley's love for Mellors, therefore, must be viewed as a protest against the fixity—a protest of which we have noted examples in the earlier novels of Lawrence. The love of Constance is, however, not merely a protest. Nor is it concentric to sex. Had sex been the end Michaelis would have served her. Her centre of action is her individuality. That is why Lawrence has made an effective juxtaposition between tradition* and individuality through the contrast between Clifford and Constance. Clifford demands traditional response from his wife by asserting that she remains his, while Constance is equally strong in asserting that her response to the environment must arise from her individuality. The two streams of life which Lawrence has depicted in

his earlier novels have been depicted here also. On the one hand is the society-theme the components of which derive sanction from money, power, and tradition, and on the other are Constance and Mellors whose actions derive from no external source but from within them. The latter, Lawrence would have us believe, is the creative way to live and evolve : to live fully is to live from the creative centre within. The love-theme has this positive basis. In this context we may re-examine the structural significance of the sudden change of scene from Wragby to Venice. The change of scene is simultaneous with Connie's decision to reject the forces of money, power, and tradition, the forces which try to make her life a mechanistic function. The past, as it were, is totally rejected. Constance becomes ultra-historical. There is a growth into something new. Structurally Venice stands as a function of this novelty ; the geographical shift becomes a function of the thematic shift or of the final resolution. Structure and theme become organic. It must be noted that though the form of this novel appears simpler than that of *Women in Love*, the organization of the components of the themes is as complex.

One can now easily discern the desire for the wholeness of living, and the desire to have a vital principle of life as it has been revealed through the love-theme by systematic contrast. Without the parallel society-theme and the systematic contrast the significance would have eluded us as it eluded Hough when he wrote about the "vulgarly conventional" story of Lady Chatterley. If a synopsis is made afresh it will not appear vulgarly conventional. Constance Chatterley is a healthy woman in the prime of her youth. Unlike the pseudo-modern, she wishes to live by an integrating principle of life. Money, success, and power, which are relied upon by the modern industrial populace, appear inadequate to her, as all the vital elements of man are not accommodated in their scheme. Unlike her counterparts in the modern society she cannot bear the feeling of drifting on indefinitely. And her husband does not have the capacity of giving her the security of belonging. This is not merely because he is sexually disabled, but because he is a drifter like Michaelis. And his inability to give her a sense of belonging is clearly expressed in his generous but vulgar suggestion that she could have children through other men. As her restlessness grows, she tries to fulfil herself through sex, with Michaelis. The trial gives only partial and temporary relief. Sex is not an end in itself and so Michaelis is rejected in spite of his capacity for giving her sexual satisfaction and in spite of the fact that Clifford is agreeable to the temporary prostitution of Constance. She is, however, required to pledge her soul to Clifford, while she can do what she likes

with her body. The position is impossible and degrading. Constance fails to live in such a situation. At this moment she finds in Mellors the qualities which may integrate life. He is not a by-product of the industrial civilization. He is not a drifter. He is not pseudo-modern because, in spite of his isolation, he is not empty of an integrating principle of life. He is poor class, but real. By his old-fashionedness Lawrence is not preaching a back-to-nature idea. Mellors is not a symbol of the primitive man. He is modern in the sense in which Jung has described the truly modern man : "...the really modern man is often to be found among those who call themselves old fashioned."⁷

With him she rediscovers sex and is stripped to the primal self where life is connected with fundamental life-issues and urges. The only thing for her is to go to Mellors. And she does. Clifford demands that she stay as his wife for she is committed to him by status. In this conflict between commitment to society and commitment to self—between tradition and individuality—Constance's individuality wins and she leaves Clifford. The growth of individualism is a fact of modern life, and the decision of Constance is realistic as it is in consonance with recognized facts : "But the greatest creation of the new way of life was a psychological one : the gain in individuality."⁸ Thus the decisions taken by the characters derive—at least on one level—from psychological and sociological facts. There is no didacticism ; Lawrence does not intrude.

We have studied two functions of the second theme : the first was the contrast it provided to tone down the loudness of the love-theme, and the second was the significance it lent to the love-theme. Its final function is its contribution to the realism of the story. Because of this our conventional anticipation of the story is frustrated and we are dissatisfied. The cause of dissatisfaction is neither deliberateness, nor dramatic restriction. The cause lies in the juxtaposition between the society-theme and the love-theme through a series of contrasts ; between the real and the aspirational, the ugly and the beautiful, the disintegrating and the integral, the intellectual and impulsive, the mechanical and the creative. Lawrence wanted to produce a balance between the two. We are dissatisfied because we have not been oriented to receive it as such. While we search for an undiluted story of love and sex, Lawrence's depiction of modern decadence surprises and frustrates us. The juxtaposition is fundamental and deep-seated ; it is a contrast between the general and the particular, between the conventional and the unique. Lawrence develops in parallel the general drift of modern life, the growth of a mechanical

civilization with men becoming increasingly isolated and rootless, yet without identity, lost in masses, and the particular life which overcomes isolation with union through an assertion of individuality which is apparently stable and rooted but in a deeper sense completely isolated, connected within only with the basic life-issues and urges, heading nothing else. It shows Lawrence's allotropic vision—consistent with Lawrence's perception of life—whereby he is capable of observing simultaneously the general drift of life on the one hand and the individual life on the other. Yet the structural solidarity and organic unity of the novel are remarkable. The form is distinctly harmonic, as in *Women in Love*, with simultaneous development of various themes. Both the society-theme and the love-theme move simultaneously through time, while there is also a movement in value. The form has the same complex beauty as of *Women in Love* with the difference that it has lesser variety but greater compactness.

Eliseo Vivas, however, feels that there is no organic unity in the story. He says that, on a careful look the book falls apart into two stories whose proper relationship has been bungled.⁹ The two stories he finds are the stories of Constance and Mellors, and of Clifford and Mrs Bolton. Vivas says, "When we step back from the canvas in order to grasp it as a whole we discover to our astonishment that the story of Clifford does not keep its subordinate place."¹⁰ He assigns for it biographical reasons, the validity of which is controversial. But we are concerned here with the aesthetic aspect of it. Vivas feels that the story of Clifford assumes unwieldy importance towards the end of the novel. He assumes that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is "undeniably an anti-Clifford tract"¹¹ and that Clifford has been treated as the "villain" of the piece;¹² Lawrence has given Clifford this undue importance in the process of vilifying the Cliffords of the world for personal reasons. The vilification question apart, one fails to understand how else could the story have been treated. Clifford Chatterley is an integral part of the society-theme and the axis of the moral choice in the love story. Take Clifford away, and the very foundation of the moral challenge is weakened. Moreover, the story is constituted of Connie's relationship with Clifford and with Mellors. That justifies his importance in the first part of the story. The climax comes in Ch. XV when Connie finally resolves to marry Mellors. Thereafter Lawrence could not possibly have ignored Clifford. Any negligence of Clifford would have left a loose end unresolved and would have been a structural defect. Clifford has to be dealt with conclusively, and this Lawrence has done. He has shown a slow but subtle change come over Clifford towards the end. The

seed of this change was sown earlier, when Constance appointed Mrs Bolton to look after Clifford. He resented it but soon adjusted himself to it. His need was not for a wife, nor did he have the emotional force to establish vital contact with his wife : "With Connie, he was a little stiff. He felt he owed her everything, everything, and he showed her the utmost respect and consideration, so long as she gave him mere outward respect. But it was obvious he had a secret dread of her." (Ch. IX) His need was for a caretaker. So he gradually accepted Mrs Bolton as a substitute for Constance and was happy with her :

He was not aware how much Mrs Bolton was behind him. He did not know how much he depended on her. But for all that, it was evident that when he was with her his voice dropped to an easy rhythm of intimacy, almost a trifle vulgar

Only when he was alone with Mrs Bolton did he really feel a lord and a master, and his voice ran on with her almost as easily and garrulously as her own could run. (Ch. IX)

For him the functional utility of a wife would not have been any more. In the process of the story Clifford gradually discovered himself. Under Mrs Bolton's influence Clifford began to take a new interest in the mines. He began to feel he belonged. A new sort of self-assertion came into him :

It was Mrs Bolton's talk that really put a new fight into Clifford...

But under Mrs Bolton's influence, Clifford was tempted to enter this other fight, to capture the bitch-goddess by brute means of industrial production. Somehow, he got his pecker up. In one way, Mrs Bolton made a man of him, as Connie never did. ..

He began to read again his technical works on the coal-mining industry, he studied the Government reports, and he read with care the latest things on mining and the chemistry of coal and of shale which were written in German. ...

He went down to the pit day after day, he studied, he put the general manager, and the overhead manager, and the underground manager, and the engineers through a mill they had never dreamed of. Power! He felt a new sense of power flowing through him : power over all these men, over the hundreds and hundreds of colliers. ...

And he seemed verily to be re-born. Now life came into him

He had been gradually dying, with Connie, in the isolated private life of the artist and the conscious being. Now let all that go. Let it sleep. He simply felt life rush into him out of the coal, out of the pit. (Ch. IX)

The later Clifford is masculine and virile.¹³ At the end we find him merged with the society-theme of the story. He evolves into a man whose integrating principle of life is money and success. The process of the evolution starts Ch. IX and culminates in his rejection of emotion and his outlining of his industrial philosophy in Ch. XIII. It is utterly materialistic. Society, he imagines, has two basic appetites :

He realized now that the bitch-goddess of success had two main appetites : one for flattery, adulation, stroking and tickling, such as writers and artists gave her ; but the other a grimmer appetite for meat and bones. And the meat and bones for the bitch-goddess were provided by the men who made money in industry. (Ch. IX)

There are those who supply materials for the appetites. The writers and the artists, who simply supply non-material needs, are flatterers. The real bosses or aristocrats are the "men who own and run industries" (Ch. XIII), and supply material needs. Society is made up of the unalterable masses—"It is the masses : they are unchangeable...The masses are unalterable" (Ch. XIII)—and the bosses. Both are parts of fate : " 'Aristocracy is a function, a part of fate. And the masses are a functioning of another part of fate. The individual hardly matters.' " (Ch. XIII) With the individual, thus, the values of the individual's existence are also destroyed. When Clifford asks about Proust at dinner time, Connie says, " 'He doesn't have feeling, he only has streams of words about feelings. I am tired of self-important mentalities.' " (Ch. XIII) To counter this assault on his cerebral existence he rejects the whole world of feeling as animality : " 'Would you prefer self-important animalities ?' " (Ch. XIII) As the novel proceeds Clifford grows in complexity. To say that he lacks density, as Sagar does would be unreasonable.¹⁴

This Clifford is not lampooned, not a villain, but has become very real, holding a philosophy which is in fact available in modern industrial life and is legitimately practised, though Connie in her headless way is opposed to it and goes up in a rage crying, " 'Him and buying people !' " (Ch. XIII) The juxtaposition is clear. Love in the love-theme is counterpoised against money and power in the society-theme into which Clifford gradually grows until he both represents and defines it. His character is deftly given a roundness before he is withdrawn. Clifford has to stay

At the end, firstly because, he should be rounded off and satisfactorily disposed, and, secondly, to provide thematic contrast, as he has evolved into the society theme and represents it. When we got a final glimpse of him in the last chapter where he meets Connie, he is perfectly rounded in his attitude. When Constance says that she should stay with the man she loves, he replies : " 'No, I don't see it ! I don't give tuppence for your love, nor for the man you love. I don't believe in that sort of cant.' " (Ch. XIX) The importance of Clifford can hardly be called a structural defect. On the contrary it testifies to Lawrence's skill. As to why Mrs Bolton exists the reasons are obvious : one must remember that she represents the society-theme and, through her, sketches of Tevershall society have been revealed from Ch. IX onwards ; partly through her presence Clifford has been assimilated into the society-theme ; through Clifford's attachment to her Lawrence shows that a wife is superfluous for Clifford ; and lastly, as Graham Hough has pointed out, she is a counterpoint for Mellors and contributes to the balancing of the story.¹⁵ Thus, there is hardly any structural imbalance.

Moore, discussing Clifford, points out another defect : "If Lawrence actually depended this much on his daemon, the daemon had become less reliable than he had been in the past. For the physical crippling of Clifford greatly weakens the story."¹⁶ This imputation derives from the assumption that Clifford was a symbol of the sexless, prudish modern aristocrat. But Lawrence has time and again denied this, and has asserted that the characters were not originally conceived as symbols :

As to whether the symbolism is intentional—I don't know. Certainly not at the beginning, when Clifford was created. When I created Clifford and Connie, I had no idea what they were or why they were. They just came, pretty much as they are. But .. when I read the first version, I recognised that the lameness of Clifford was symbolic. Yet the story came as it did, by itself, so I left it alone. Whether we call it symbolic or not, it is, in the sense of its happening, inevitable.¹⁷

Similar is the reiteration in the letter written to D. V. Lederhandler. The symbolism which Lawrence discovered later was unconscious and accidental, and has since been forced upon him :

Yes, the paralysis of Clifford is symbolic—all art is *au fond* symbolic, conscious or unconscious. When I began *Lady C.*, of course I did not know what I was doing—I did not deliberately work symbolically. But by the time the book was finished I realised what unconscious symbolism was. And I wrote the book three times—I have three complete MSS—pretty different,

yet the same. The, wood is of course unconscious symbolism perhaps even the mines—even Mrs Bolton. ¹⁸

A novelist starts with some basic facts and then builds upon them. Clifford, the cripple, was such a basic fact. He was not conceived as a healthy man and then crippled due to the author's prejudice or his desire to reduce him to a symbol. If we change these basic premises we change the whole work. A symbol is something which stands for something entirely different or for an idea. If Clifford is, said to stand for sexlessness, he would be a symbol. But such an understanding of Clifford is one of bits of him. He includes the symbol but is much more than that. He represents a way of life lived by many today. In so far as he represents other people, projects a way of life, reflects certain complex responses to a new age he is not a symbol ; much more than that. Laurentian symbolism is always vague, undefined, and complex, and Laurentian character is always more than a symbol ; he retains too much independence and autonomy as an existent to be entirely representative of the subsistent. Moreover, I am inclined to agree with Hough when he says that far from being a defect, the crippling of Clifford strengthens Lawrence's case. Far from "Lampooning" the shallow 'young aristocrats,' as Moore suggests,¹⁹ Lawrence was deliberately swaying the sympathy of the readers towards Clifford by crippling him.²⁰ Lawrence was fully aware of what he was doing :

I realised that it was perhaps taking an unfair advantage of Connie to paralyse him technically. It made it so much vulgar of her to leave him. Yet the story came as it did, by itself, so I left it alone.²¹

The crippling of Clifford makes the moral issues in the novel painfully difficult for Constance and challenging for all of us, dividing us and our sympathies for the two. Clifford is no villain, nor Constance Diana. The meticulously managed balance of sympathy contributes to the objectivity of the novel and Hough correctly points out that Lawrence is "remarkably dispassionate towards his character."²² *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is beyond question a rare technical achievement where issues are always pushed to the brink and the opposites are kept forever trembling in balance.

REFERENCES

1. *The Dark Sun : A Study of D.H. Lawrence* (London, 1956), p. 151.
2. Cf. Mark Schorer, "Introduction to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*," reproduced in, *Appropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover and Other Essays* (Harmondsworth, England,

1961). Schorer recognizes the "thematic contrast" (p. 153). He calls the two themes "social world" and "lyrical world" (p. 131). But Schorer goes on to interpret the juxtaposition as an interplay of symbols. It is, however, found difficult to agree with Schorer when he says, "it is a novel in which everything is symbolic." (p. 146)

3. *D. H. Lawrence : Novelist* (London, 1964), p. 228.
4. *Vide C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of Soul* (London, 1953), p. 228. "Pseudo-modern" is Jung's phrase.
5. Even some of the coituses infuse doubt and remorse in Constance, viz. first and fourth with Mellors. In the latter the ridiculing of the coital experience comes after Mellors's first ejaculation.
6. Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D. H. Lawrence* (Indiana, 1957), p. 5, 23.
7. Jung, *Modern Man*, p. 229.
8. J. A. C. Brown, *The Social Psychology of Industry* (Harmondsworth, England, 1958), p. 28 ff.
9. Eliseo Vivas, *D. H. Lawrence : The Failure and the Triumph of Art* (London, 1960), p. 121.
10. *Ibid* , p. 122.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
13. Keith Sagar, *The Art of D. H. Lawrence* (Cambridge, 1966), p. 185.
14. *Cf. Ibid.*, p. 196.
15. *Dark Sun*, p. 157.
16. Harry T. Moore, *The Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence* (London, 1963), p. 208.
17. *Appropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*.
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20. Hough, *Dark Sun*, p. 165.
21. *Appropos*.
22. *Dark Sun*, p. 165.

YEATS INDIA AND INDIAN CRITICS

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It is natural that in his search for relevance in the studies of a foreign literature, an Indian Scholar should be led to lay more emphasis on those aspects of the writer's thought which will help him to understand his own response to experience. In Yeatsian studies this constitutes almost a challenge to our sense of proportion. One sometimes feels that we react in such a way as if we had a sort of vested interest in things mystical and religious. Do we feel competent to study Yeats just because we have more sympathy for his occult studies or because we have a more authentic knowledge, owing to our instinctive and hereditary understanding of his esoteric themes? Is it our ambition to give a superior verdict on Yeats's understanding of eastern thoughts and attitudes and thus offer to the uninitiated western readers some guidance as to how much of Yeats's arcane systems should be taken seriously? Or, more fundamentally, is it our aim to say that the knowledge and understanding of Indian thought can explain all of Yeats's works and thus set out to annotate Yeats with the help of the Indian sources? Yeats is too complex a poet to permit us such an easy elucidation. But it is also true that there is a tendency among many western critics to overlook such cross cultural influence as an idiosyncrasy. In fact it was once fashionable to play down Yeats's interest in eastern thought at just a decadent poet's fascination for the exotic and the remote.

Even Dr. Narayana Menon in his study on *The Development of W. B. Yeats* (1942) found Yeats's interest in Indian thought 'naive' and his adoration of Mohini Chatterjee "pathetic". Dr. Menon went as far as to endorse T. S. Eliot's remark that the influence of Hindu thought in Europe was largely due to Romantic misunderstanding. Dr. Narayana Menon added :

'The same is true of Yeats though he did not apply himself to the study of Eastern thought and philosophy with half the seriousness of any of these (Schopenhauer, Von Hartmann etc.)' p. 13.

This is of course not tenable any longer since we have a more complete information about Yeats's reading and we know Yeats did try to understand Indian thought seriously enough. This is evident in Yeats's remark on A. E. :

I wonder what he would have been had he not met in early life the poetry of Emerson and Whitman...and those translation of the Upanishads, which it is so much *harder* to study by the sinking flame of Indian tradition than by the serviceable lamp of Emerson and Whitman.¹

And it was the *harder* path which always fascinated Yeats. So I don't think we should be apologetic or self-denying about the fact that Indian thought did have considerable impact on Yeats's thought and sensibilities. Recently Professor Naresh Guha in his book² on Yeats and Professor Farag³ of Egypt in a centenary essay have successfully shown that this interest was not at all 'spasmodic'.

Now if we emphasize this aspect of Yeats's preoccupation, do we of necessity engage ourselves in 'occultation' of Yeats or try to dislodge him from the main tradition of English poetry? This was a fear expressed by Allen Tate and it was echoed somewhat mutely also by Dr. Rajan in his monograph on Yeats. Here we have to start with some disentanglement.

For a deeper appreciation of the Hindu influence on western thought we must look beyond the great shadow of Madame Blavatsky and her Theosophical Lodge and a little forward from what T. S. Eliot thought the Romantic misunderstanding of Hindu ideas. The years around the Mutiny and upto the 1880's were the period when serious understanding of Indian philosophy and religion took place in the West. And those who disseminated this new interest were all writing from the central tradition of British thought. Buckle's famous *History of Civilization* (1857), which claimed to be written from a scientific point of view, had a whole chapter devoted to Indian thought. The Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice whom J. S. Mill described as one of the seminal minds of the mid-nineteenth century and whom Gladstone called the spiritual splendour of their age paraphrased the *Bhagawat Gita* in his *Ancient Philosophy* (1850). He also remarked that the commercial civilisation of the West had a lesson to learn from the 'Hindoos' who thought that man was made for something else than to buy and sell, to eat, drink and die'. Another great Anglican divine, the Bishop Colenso of Natal, who created a great sensation by his critical examination of *The Pentateuch* (1863-1878) [where he sought to prove 'the groundlessness of the notion of scriptural inspiration',] felt called upon 'to fill up the aching void,'⁴ by referring to a few Indian hymns. Similarly a Dean of St. Pauls, the Rev. R. W. Church in *The Gift of Civilisation* (1874) commented on the translation of the *Vedas* to the following effect :

'It is not surprising that these mysterious utterances breaking on us from the dawn of time should have awakened a very deep

interest. They seem to require us to revise our judgment and *widen our thought.*' p. 382

'To widen our thought', this aspect is to be emphasised rather than the Theosophical claim of offering a substitute to Christianity. Needless to remind ourselves that this was the period in which Max Muller accomplished the heroic translation of the *Sacred Books* of the East and the translation of the Vedas. And Max Muller did not change his religion, nor did he ever visit India and sit at the feet of any Guru.

It is also interesting to note that the fashionable vogue of Spiritualism, in the sense of communicating with the spirit of the dead, found, as propagators in the 'seventies among others of considerable eminence, several serious scientists like Wallace (the co-discoverer with Darwin of the theory of evolution,) and Sir William Crookes, the famous Physicist. It is quite certain that Spiritualism did not simply thrive as "a Papier mache for the idle rich", as George Eliot remarked in one of her letters, but had considerable psychological appeal for the Protestants, especially at the time of bereavement. Only this can account for the great popularity of spiritualism among all classes in America in the later half of the nineteenth century. A historian of British theological thought has remarked that Spiritualism satisfied certain emotional needs of people who were deprived of any sense of personal immortality owing to the spread of materialistic thought and the rationalistic doctrine of the Church : 'The Church of the day', says he, 'was opposed to prayers for the dead and in the Burial Service seemed to place all the emphasis on the sorrow of parting and to neglect the note of Christian joy.'⁵

This is important because a need for some assurance of immortality developed considerable interest in the Upanishadic philosophy of the Self and the neo-Platonic philosophy of Plotinus. According to Yeats Plotinus was the first in Europe to establish as sole source the timeless individuality or Daimon instead of the Platonic Idea ⁶ and thus affirmed that man has lived many times, that nothing exists but a stream of souls. This led to Yeats's interest in spiritualism and to his affirmation of personality through his peculiar brand of mysticism :

All about us there seems to start up a precise inexplicable teeming life, and the earth becomes once more, not in rhetorical metaphor, but in reality, sacred. [*Explorations* p. 368]

With such a background of development towards an understanding of mysticism it will be wrong to dismiss Yeats's and, for that matter, the late nineteenth century interest in Indian thought as simply a pursuit of a vogue. Mr. Elliott-Binns has pointed out in his book on *Religion in the Victorian Era* that mysticism which was a word of abuse in Pro-

testant theology became acceptable even in orthodox circles towards the close of the nineteenth century. So much so that the highly respectable Oxford philosopher J. R. Green prophesied in the Eighties that the 'Faith of the future will be found in the union of mysticism with the freedom of thought and enquiry'.⁷ Dean Inge thought it important to choose mysticism as the subject for his Bampton lecture in 1899. Professor William James delivered his Gifford lecture at Edinburgh in 1901 on mysticism and said that his purpose was to rehabilitate the element of feeling in religion and subordinate its intellectual part. (*The varieties of Religious Experience*—p. 501). Thus it is quite apparent that the main tradition of thought in England was moving, away from its rational and orthodox strongholds, towards a new synthesis, in the later nineteenth century, the period when Yeats matured.

Northrop Fry has recently remarked ⁸ that Yeats's debt to the Catholic poets of the late nineteenth century has perhaps not been sufficiently studied. My own apprehension is that Yeats derived his sustenance not so much from the Catholic mystics as from the heterodox mysticism of the East because he was more concerned with the unity of Being than with the union of the human soul with God.

But more important for our present purpose is to state that Yeats sought a new tradition, as he himself said, through dreams and fairies and a fardel of stories, and that he found it in the stream of mystical thought which was developing in the later half of nineteenth century. Owing to this search for a new tradition, a new subject-matter, which is evident even in his earliest poetry, Yeats cannot be placed without some qualification with the effete post-Romantic group of poets of the nineties. ⁹ With the Decadent poets one feels that even the best of them in their best moments worked from the conviction that, as Davidson put it, 'The fires are out and I must hammer the cold iron' ¹⁰, whereas even in Yeats's early poems it is the element of fire that enlivens everything ; we come across phrases such as the 'sudden-flaming' words even though in sadness ; we hear of the parrot raging at his own image ; of 'Cuchulain battling with the bitter tide' ; of the secret spirit of King Goll where glowed the 'whirling and wandering fire' ; the fire in the old fox-hunter's eyes that gleamed till the moment of death listening to the huntsman's 'gay wandering cry' ; or of the old pensioner who could spit into the face of time that transfigured him. It is the affirmation of rage and fire and of heroism that dominates Yeats's early vision and thus associates his poetry with all those hopeful dreams of a renewal of civilisation which inspired the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Yeats has said it himself :

Our civilisation was about to reverse itself, or some new civilisation was about to be born from all that our age had rejected...
(Explorations p. 393)

It is interesting to note that this idea of spiritual resurgence of the world was specially heralded by the Hermetic Society which was founded in England in 1881 by Edward Maitland and Mrs. Anna Kingsford, four years ahead of the Dublin Society. Yeats makes no mention of this English society but it is very unlikely that Yeats should not have heard of this couple and their work *The Perfect Way* (1881) which the authors thought fulfilled the popular prophecies of the time. The old world had come to an end and they had given the last blow to the old dogma-ridden religion and material science. But they also made it possible to rehabilitate religion by showing the new way of interpreting the myths of religion in terms of allegories and emblems of the drama of each human soul. It might also be interesting for Yeats students to note another point about this spiritual partnership, namely that their book *The Perfect Way* was materialised through visions seen by Mrs. Kingsford and Maitland's interpretation of them. One might think harshly of them for their self-delusion in thinking of themselves as the harbingers of the new spiritual dawn, but they belonged to the same tradition we are trying to present in this paper. And one cannot deny that Yeats wrote from a similar angle of vision, as a letter to O'leary he wrote in 1892 :

The mystical life is the centre of all that I do.. and I have always considered myself a voice of what I believe to be a greater renaissance—the revolt of the soul against the intellect—now beginning in the world.

We have tried to show that in this 'greater renaissance' a considerable inspiration was supplied by Indian thought ; and that Yeats in his 'pathetic'¹¹ adoration of Mohini Chatterjee and in his life-long studies of Indian philosophy and the various branches of religion and thought, was trying to absorb as much as was necessary for his creative dynamism. More than that we need not assert.

II

I have said earlier that the besetting danger that awaits an Indian Scholar in approaching 'Yeats is to make either too much or too little of Yeats' response to Indian thought. Once Doctor Rajan received a pungent stricture from F. R. Leavis for trying to 'correct Mr. Eliot authoritatively about Krishna'; we find similar attempts on the part of Narayan Menon in his book on Yeats :

The Hindu in the sculptured caverns of Elephanta discovers a profound answer to the riddle of the world, He (Yeats) says in the introduction to the works of Blake. One would think by that he understood the deep significance of Hindu art, the concept of Samadhi, of art as a means of edification. But no in the next breath he says that the gypsy finds an equally efficacious answer in the markings of the sea-shell that he carries to bring his good fortune...(Op. cit. P. 13)

After that Dr. Menon goes on to dismiss Yeats's interest in Indian themes as just 'Romantic conventions' an affectation of 'a vogue' and a fancy for the 'distant lure', which of course no serious reader of Yeats could admit. It is very difficult to explain this reaction of Dr. Menon except as a peculiar symptom of the Hindu mind which arrogates to itself a special spiritual understanding denied to others ; and there was no ground for being annoyed at the introduction of the Gipsy sea-shell because Yeats held the shells in great mystical reverence : The sea-shell features in Yeats poetry as a symbol from the very first poem of the *Crossways* (1889) and was indeed an object of mystical adoration in the West. For Yeats it was a symbol of poetic as well as spiritual concentration and of all efforts towards perfection. Elsewhere he has remarked :

Is it not certain that the Creator yawns in earthquake and thunder
and other popular displays, but toils in rounding the delicate
spiral of a shell ? ¹³

What could be more expressive as a symbol of the psychological process in attaining Samadhi than the making of a shell at the bottom of the sea? As Yeats's friend Sturge Moore says more explicitly in his celebrated poem of that name :

Nature shows nothing more rare
Than shells, not even flowers ; no
Unfading petals tinted glow
Where ocean's obscure weight is air ;
Where winds are currents, streams or tides,
Life to perfect their beauty hides.

...

...

...

Long years immersed,
Secreted by toil, conscience, thought,
Are formed art, virtue, truth.

It is evident that Dr. Menon dismissed Yeats's analogy without giving it much thought and this is also true about his other statement that 'except for the titles and the names the Indian poems are just 'Romantic convention.' Though these early poems cannot be called achievements by

Yeatsian standard, yet their themes were important to Yeats and he returned to them later to give a fuller expression. The Theme of 'Anashuya & Yijaya' "a man loved by two women", as Yeats's notes elaborate, "who had the one soul between them, the one woman waking when the other slept, and knowing but day light as the other only night", reappears in the ballad on 'The Three Bushes' and the reincarnation theme which we find in poems like 'The Indian upon God' remain an absorbing subject for Yeats in all his poetry and plays. But one must admit that the vitality of this Indian impact came considerably to his imaginative world from Yeats's ability to connect the oriental with his Celtic heritage.

After claiming so much we must however point out that the central tradition from which Yeats wrote was that of the Western thought and poetry though his understanding of them was widened by his awareness of the mystical influences of the East. This basic fact should not be ignored. Though Yeats derived considerable imaginative vitality from his Eastern studies he did not change his fundamental Western outlook and intention nor did he forget the audience whom he was addressing.

So when an Indian critic approaches Yeats he has to check the temptation, to expect too much or assume too little, in the acceptance and understanding of eastern ideas by Yeats. For instance it is wrong to assume as Professor R. K. Dasgupta has done, that Yeats's inability to do full justice to Tagore's works is an example of "the Westernman's critical failure in respect of our literature. And it is essentially a failure of civilisation."¹⁸ It will take more space than I can afford in this paper to explore the significance of Professor Dasgupta's remark—but as a student of Yeats I feel it is a hurried conclusion and has arisen out of the usual temptation mentioned above. In spite of a great mutual admiration, and, as far as Yeats was concerned, some absorption of literary influence (as shown by Professor Naresh Guha in his study of *W. B. Yeats* and by Dr. F. F. Farag in his essay "Oriental and Celtic elements in the poetry of W. B. Yeats,") Yeats and Tagore were essentially different in temperament and spiritual outlook. The difference is fundamentally, in Yeatsian language, between one who looked upon 'the Soul as a mirror' and the other who looked upon it as 'a brazier'; one, a poet of delicate sincerity, the other a poet of the mask and imitative energy; at a metaphysical level, one looked at reality as a Single Being and the other considered it as a congeries of beings. This is what Yeats described as a difference of Primary and Antithetical vision; but it is wrong to imply that it constitutes a barrier between two civilisations. In terms of Poetry even within Ireland we have seen the achieve-

ments of A. E. and W. B. Yeats ; to be sure, it will be wrong to judge their works in measure of their respective mystical attainment.

To assume that because Yeats did not accept all the usual conclusions of Indian traditional philosophy—his knowledge and understanding of them must be incomplete or just 'adventitious', is a typical Indian attitude which we will do well to overcome. In this connection Mokashi Punekar's study of *The Later Phase in the Development of W.B. Yeats* (Dharwar, 1966) may be briefly noted.

I must admit, this book has the unique merit of considering Yeats's thought or systems of thought with a seriousness which only an Indian critic could have supplied. The writer says in his introduction :

'This work which is the fruit of over ten years unmitigated labour has left the author a very tired man. But he is rewarded in other ways, for instance, in framing his own understanding of life.'

However salutary such a critical effort may be in terms of one's spiritual attainments, it leaves the impression, to phrase it in Yeats's language, that 'we do not seek truth in argument or in books but clarification of what we already believe.' (*Exploration* p. 310)

The fundamental question which seem to be gnawing at the heart of Mokashi Punekar's study is whether Yeats had affirmed the Indian tradition of thought and philosophy or had rejected it. We have poems like 'Vacillation', "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" and numerous other prose statements where the problem of the One and the Many seemed to be resolved in terms of Life and the 'Frog spawn of a blind man's ditch'; more in terms of a tragic acceptance of life than in the hope of transcendence. So inevitably the logic of the barriers of civilisation is invoked :

"The Western civilisation could receive only an art religion, a subjective impulse. But what norms he needed for the dynamics of a subjective-existence, he received among others, from Indians, and particularly from Shri Purohit Swami." (Op. cit)

Mokashi Punekar offers 'The Metaphysical Songs' as a positive achievement possible due to Purohit Swami's influence ; what made the mystical pure abstraction suddenly singable ? he asks and answers that they are 'a monument of Yeats's triumph over his fear of the subjective abstraction.' Shri Purohit chased away Yeats's fear of being 'struck dumb' by spirituality. He goes on to say that 'what Yeats wanted was a living example of a spiritual life at peace with a joyous psychical energy.' In Shri Purohit Swami he got such a norm. But is it true to say that in these poems, 'Yeats has put his seal of approval on asceticism ?' I should be more inclined to accept the view of Dr. Rajan who remarks

that 'they complement the Crazy Jane poems by representing the sexuality of spirit rather than the spirituality of sex.'¹⁴ Dr. Rajan's reading is critically more useful though we may reject his oversimplified explanation that these poems are simply the first fruit of the steinach operation.' Such an explanation would surely earn Mokashi Punekar's stricture on the 'shallow humanist who display an open vested interest in doubting and denigrating Yeats's mysticism'. But we have to make it clear to Dr. Mokashi Punekar that our vested interest is not on the vindication of asceticism either.

Barring these reservations one must be grateful to Dr. Mokashi Punekar and also to Dr. Naresh Guha ¹⁵ for facing the question of Yeats's relation with Indian thought in a more unabashed way. The enigmatic character of Shri Purohit Swami who was dismissed by Professor Jeffares as a diverting influence on Yeats has come to occupy a distinct position in relation with Yeats's later mastery over his spiritual studies, in Mokashi Punekar's book. And Professor Naresh Guha's book has the distinction of being a very readable analysis of Yeats interest in tantric and yogic tradition—and its possible impact in helping Yeats to synthesize his interest in physiology and metaphysics at the height of poetry. Dr. Guha has also thrown more light on Mohini Chatterjee who charmed Yeats so very profoundly in his most impressionable years ; and Dr. Guha has finally settled the controversy about Yeats's disenchantment with Tagore, made prominent by Abinash Bose's pamphlet "My Interview with Yeats" (1937). Dr. Guha points out that Yeats continued to take considerable critical interest in Tagore's work all his life and that his later play *The Hern's Egg* (1939), derives much of its Irish plot from Tagore's *The King of the Dark Chamber*. This is corroborated by one of Yeats own letters to Tagore in 1931. "I therefore want to tell you that I am still your most loyal student and admirer." In conclusion I should like to agree with Professor Guha that Yeats brought himself 'by intelligent study to a point where he could understand western culture in terms of the East, and eastern in terms of the West. Some of his poetic power must derive from this largeness of vision which came from his particular exploration of Indian thought in depth.' (p. 140),

REFERENCES

1. *Autobiographies*, P. 246.
2. *Vide W.B. Yeats : An Indian Approach*—Naresh Guha, Jadavpur, 1968.
3. 'Oriental and Celtic Element' in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats' by Dr. F.F. Farag in *W.B. Yeats 1865-1965*. Ed. Maxwell & Bushrui, (Ibadan).

4. See Vol.V, P.154 ; Vol. VI, PP. 484-487 ; PP. 750-756,
5. *English Thought : The Theological Aspect 1850-1900* by L. E. Elliott-Binns, P. 328-Longmans (1956).
6. *Explorations* P. 368.
7. *Letters of J.R. Green* P. 80, quoted by Elliott-Binns, Op. cit PP. 226-227.
8. See Fry's essay in *An Honoured Guest* Ed. Denoghue & Malryne. Edward Arnolds (1965).
9. This seems to be the view of Dr. B. Chatterjee in *the Poetry of W.B. Yeats* Longmans (1962). See P. 71. I have read Dr. Chatterjee's book only after the completion of this essay. Professor Chatterjee has not however made any claim on the influence of Indian thought as a possible source of Yeatsian vitality and as such his book is outside the purview of this essay.
10. Quoted by Yeats in his *Autobiographies*, P. 318.
11. The phrase also occurs in Professor Jeffares's book on *Yeats : Man And Poets*. P.32 (Paper Back)
12. *Autobiographies*, P.249 MacMillan (1955).
13. *Rabindra Nath Tagore & W. B. Yeats* Ed. R.K. Dasgupta, University of Delhi (1965).
14. *W.B. Yeats : A Critical Introduction*—P.152.
15. Op. Cit.

